

WORK AND WIN

An Interesting Weekly for Young America.

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No. 736.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 10, 1913.

Price 5 Cents.

FRED FEARNOT AT AVON AGAIN OR HIS SECOND TERM AT SCHOOL

AND OTHER STORIES

By *Hal Standish*



He aimed a blow at him, grasping the hoe-handle with both hands. It was parried, and he got another crack. Fred could have easily downed him, but he didn't wish to hurt him. A third time he reached at Fred.

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- 16 Fred Fearnot's Good Work; or, Helping a Friend in Need.
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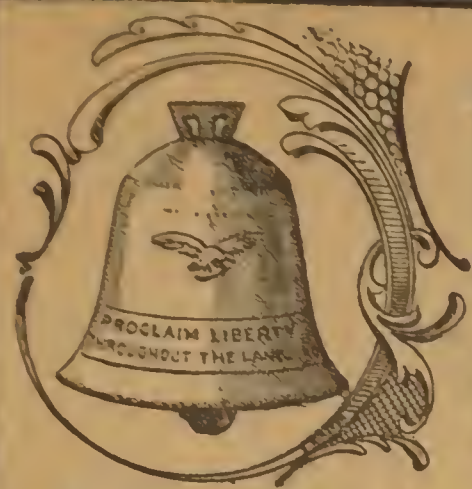
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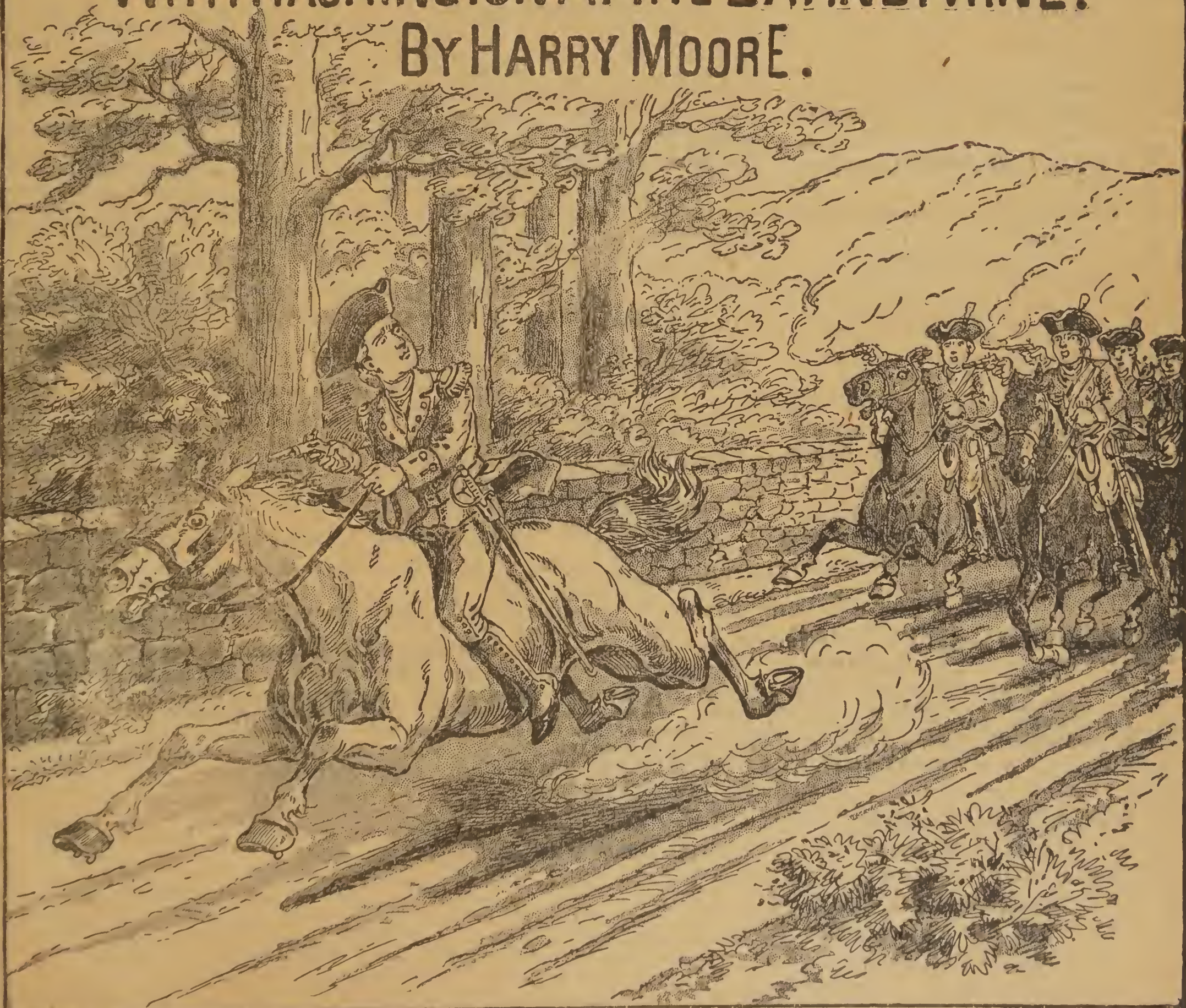
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FRED FEARNOT AT AVON AGAIN

OR,

HIS SECOND TERM AT SCHOOL

By HAL STANDISH

CHAPTER I.

FRED FEARNOT AND TERRY OLCOTT RETURN TO THE AVON ACADEMY—THEIR RECEPTION.

"In another hour we'll be there, Terry."

"Yes, and I guess we'll find some of the boys at the station."

"Do they know we are coming?"

"Yes. I wrote Dick Duncan that we would arrive to-day. Didn't you write to any of them about your coming?"

"No, only to Professor Lambert."

"Oh, I guess he'll let the boys know it."

"I'm not sure of that. He stands back on his dignity, you know."

"Oh, yes, but you can bet Eunice will let the boys know it, and by the way, Fred, if you haven't got a little present for her she'll be a very much disappointed girl."

"Oh, I've got a little present for her and her mother, too."

"Her mother, eh? You are a wise boy, old man, in keeping on the good side of the old lady."

"Well, let me tell you, you'll be on her wrong side the rest of your life if she ever hears that you once called her 'old lady.'"

"Right you are! But if you ever tell her I used that expression in connection with her name you will be cut off in your youth."

"Don't worry; I won't give you away. I hope Dick won't get up any monkey business when he arrives at the station."

"Oh, you may look for the whole class to be there."

"Well, I don't, for that would be entirely out of the usual."

"Of course, it would, but you see the papers have said a good deal about us since we left the school to chase those bank robbers, and because we caught them the boys have been whooping it up ever since, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if they met us with a brass band."

"Oh, come off: if I thought that I'd get off the train a mile or two outside of the town and walk in."

"Oh, you be hanged; face the music like a man."

"Oh, well, I don't like that sort of thing, Terry."

"There are a good many things we don't like. Very few people like to take medicine. All the same they have to gulp it down at times."

The conductor came along through the car, holding the yellow envelope of a telegraphic dispatch in his hand. He stopped at the seat where the two boys were sitting, and asked Terry Olcott if he knew any one on board of the name of Fred Fearnot.

"Yes," replied Terry, "here he is;" and he nudged Fred who was sitting by his side.

"Are you Fred Fearnot?" the conductor asked, looking at Fred.

"Yes; that's my name. What's the trouble?"

"I don't know that there's any trouble at all, sir; but the station agent at Avon wired me to let him know whether you were on this train."

"The deuce he did!"

"Yes; here's the dispatch," and the conductor drew it from the yellow envelope and let him read it.

Fred read it and passed it back to the conductor, remarking:

"I guess it's from some of the academy boys, who want to put up some kind of a joke on me."

"I don't know anything about that," returned the conductor, "but as it is from the agent I've got to answer it at the next station."

"All right. Tell 'em I'm on board and loaded to the muzzle."

The conductor placed the dispatch in his pocket and passed on through the car. At the next station he handed the agent a dispatch to be forwarded to Avon, stating that young Fearnot was on board and that the train was on time.

"What the deuce are the boys up to, Terry?" Fred asked his companion.

"Hanged if I know, but I guess the whole gang of them are there waiting for you. Maybe the professor and his wife and daughter are there in their carriage."

"Not on your life," replied Fred. "The old professor would never condescend to show so much partiality for any pupil he ever taught."

"I'm not so sure about that," and Terry shook his head dubiously. "You are a great favorite of the old man."

The above conversation took place between Fred Fearnot and Terry Olcott, who were returning to the Avon Academy to begin their second term at school. Both had left there before the previous term had ended to go in pursuit of two daring robbers, who had plundered the bank of Avon. By the merest accident, young Fearnot discovered a clue to the robbers, and went in pursuit of them with the sheriff and three or four deputies, and when the latter gave up the chase Fred sent for Terry, kept up the pursuit and ran the villains to earth. That feat, together with two daring rescues at Avon, in which he saved the lives of four of the High School girls from almost instant death, and a married lady and her infant from drowning in the river, gave him a splendid reputation in the town, making everybody his friend.

Fred was brave to recklessness, jolly and generous; and his modesty was such that he had an insuperable objection to being made a hero of by the others. Hence, when he suspected on the train that was conveying him back to the Avon Academy, that the boys were waiting for him at the station to give him an ovation, he was strongly tempted to beg the conductor to slow up, on reaching the outskirts of the town, and let him jump off.

Terry Olcott, his bosom friend, laughed him out of the notion and so he remained in his seat until the train slowed up in the neat little depot.

Terry looked out the window and saw the entire senior class of the Avon Academy boys waiting on the platform.

"They're all here, Fred," he remarked, as he drew his head back in the window.

"All right; there's no law to put a stop to it," laughed Fred, and he put his head out of the window and waved his hat at the boys.

They greeted him with a yell, and when he stepped off the car, seized and raised him to their shoulders, waving their hats and cheering like lunatics.

"Say, boys, what's the matter with you?" he cried. "Going to give me the degrees before I get across the bridge?"

"Yes," replied Tom Tipps; "we've got a new one for you."

"This must be it, then."

"Not a bit of it," returned Joe Jencks. "We're just glad to see you—that's all, old man!" and they bore him along the platform, at the lower end of which stood the carriage of Professor Lambert, the principal of the academy, with Black Pete perched on the seat.

"Hello, Charcoal!" he cried, and the black driver grinned from ear to ear, waving his hat at him.

When they reached the carriage the boys let him down, and then, to his very great astonishment, he beheld seated within Mrs. and Miss Lambert, the wife and daughter of the professor, both of whom gave him a smiling welcome, extending their hands towards him. He shook each one's hand and pressed it to his lips.

"Bless you!" he exclaimed. "no student was ever so honored before."

"Oh, the senior class insisted on our coming," explained Mrs. Lambert, "but we didn't need any urging at all. We are very, very glad to have you back with us again."

"Thank you, both," he replied. "My mother will feel

very proud indeed when she hears of this, and I shall lose no time in writing her about it. I hope the professor is well."

"He is very well indeed," replied Mrs. Lambert, "and requested me to extend you a cordial welcome in his name. Take this seat here by me," and she made room for him in the carriage, whilst Terry took the seat alongside of Eunice, the daughter.

As the carriages drove away the professor's wife informed Terry that they were equally as glad to see him back again.

"Thank you, madam," returned Terry, "I feel my head swelling already. How does yours feel, Fred?"

"Oh, it's swelling up fast," laughed Fred, "while my heart feels as big as all outdoors. You're like a bottle of old wine, Miss Eunice, the older you get the sweeter you are."

"Oh, my," laughed Eunice, "then mother must be ever so much sweeter than I am."

"Don't switch me off onto dangerous ground, now," laughed Fred, "for if I begin to pay compliments to another man's wife, I'll fetch up somewhere with a broken head," at which the mother and daughter laughed very heartily, the former remarking that he was as skilled at dodging as in paying compliments.

"Where does the dodge come in?" Terry asked.

"Why, didn't you notice it?" laughed the mother.

"Can't say that I did."

"You don't seem to be as sharp as when you left the school," the lady remarked.

"That's one on you, Terry," laughed Fred, "and I would suggest that you do not pursue the subject any further."

They laughed and chatted all the way up through the main street of the town, across the bridge, till they entered the academy grounds, where Fred opened the door and sprang out to assist the professor's wife and daughter to alight. Professor Lambert, with four assistant teachers, were on the stoop, to greet and welcome the two boys.

"You are looking well, professor," said Fred, as he shook the principal's hand.

"Thank you, I am feeling very well," returned the professor, and then Fred shook hands with the assistant teachers, each of whom gave him a cordial welcome.

Then he was surrounded by nearly one hundred boys, all of whom wanted to shake his hand. He was equal to the occasion, making many funny remarks as he clasped hands with them.

Teddy O'Hara, the janitor, was standing near by, waiting for a chance to shake hands with the two boys, both of whom had made him a victim of practical jokes innumerable. Fred kept his eye on him, and when he had the opportunity to do so, called out to him:

"Old man, how are you?"

"Bedad, it's well I am," returned Teddy.

"Give us your hand!" and Fred advanced towards him, extending his hand to the brawny son of Erin. Teddy grasped it, and shook it warmly, for he had a warm spot in his heart for the youth.

By that time Pete, the black porter, returned from the stable, where he had put up the horses and the carriage,

eager to welcome the only student who ever gave him a tip to the amount of a dollar.

"Charcoal, old man," exclaimed Fred; "on my soul I believe you grow blacker and blacker every day. By and by we'll have to lock you up to let the day break."

"Bless your soul, honey, I'se the same old Pete, and I ain't getting no blacker—but I'se glad to see you!" and he clasped Fred's hand in his great, black palms, and looked as though he wanted to hug him. When he drew his hand away a bright silver dollar nestled in it. It was a talisman that never failed, and the display of ivory clear across the ebony face of the porter told a depth of happiness that was unfathomable.

"Have you found the chicken yet, Charcoal?" Fred asked.

"No, sah, I ain't never seed that chicken."

"Well, I gness I'll have to give him up as lost," remarked Fred.

"Yes, sah, I expect he's done gone clean away."

"Yes, I guess so. Look out for my trunk, now, and bring it up to my room as soon as it comes." And with that Fred entered the dormitory, and made his way up to the room he had occupied during the previous term. He found a vase of flowers on the bureau and knew that they had been placed there by the hands of Eunice, the professor's daughter. He lifted the vase in both hands and inhaled the fragrance of the flowers.

"Say, old chap," laughed Joe Jencks. "You're all right with the counsellor."

"Hope I am," laughed Fred. "She has always been the friend of the boys, and the fellow that isn't her friend is no friend of mine."

The boys called the professor's daughter "counsellor," because when they got into trouble with the faculty they invariably went to her for advice and sympathy, and she frequently saved them from the consequences of flagrant violation of the rules. She was her father's pet, and when she pleaded for one of the boys she generally won the case.

When the trunks arrived, Fred and Terry found they were to occupy the same room together, an arrangement that was very satisfactory to both. Fred lost no time in opening his trunk and unpacking his clothes, and when that task was finished he took a couple of packages from the trunk, and made his way to the cottage occupied by the professor and his family, where he presented to Mrs. Lambert and Eunice the beautiful present he had brought to each. Both were charmed, and expressed their thanks in glowing terms.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE SECOND TERM, AND HOW FRED PLEASED HIS TEACHERS.

Returning from the Lambert cottage Fred once more repaired to his room, where he took from his trunk four boxes of fine cigars, which he intended to present to the professor and his assistant teachers.

"Say, Fred," said Terry, "I'm sorry I didn't think to do that, too."

"It isn't too late yet," replied Fred. "You can slip over to town and get them, for I tell you there is nothing like getting on the good side of your teacher."

"That's so," remarked Terry: "but I'm afraid they will find out that it was an afterthought with me."

"Oh, no danger of that; they will be glad enough to get them, no matter what day in the week they come. See here what I have for Teddy," and he displayed a large silk handkerchief, dotted with green shamrocks.

"By George, Fred, that will reach the very bottom of his heart. It's a beauty."

"Yes; and an expensive one, too, and I bet he'll use it only on Sundays. As for blowing his nose on it, he will regard it as a sacrilege."

"Say, I want to be with you when you give him that," laughed Terry.

"All right, we'll go down to his quarters to-night. I brought a violin with me and I'm going to take it down and play the 'Rocky Road to Dublin' for him."

Just then a rap on the door was heard and Fred invited the rapper in. The door opened and assistant teacher Brown entered.

"Take a seat, Mr. Brown," invited Fred. "I'm glad you came in, for I was just a-going to call on you with a little present I bought for you," and with that he handed him the box of cigars.

Brown's eyes opened wide, for they were fine cigars, and he was an ardent lover of the weed. It was the first time during his five years' connection with the academy that any pupil had made him a present of anything that was worth fifty cents.

"Well, well, my boy," he said; "this is such a surprise I hardly know how to thank you. I appreciate it more than I can say."

"That's all right, sir," said Fred. "Don't choke yourself trying to throw a lot of big words out, but just light one of them and smoke it. You were kind to me during my last term, and I haven't forgotten it, and never will!"

"You were kind to all of us," remarked Terry, "and I have a similar present for you myself, but as I couldn't get it in my trunk, it had to come with other things by express."

"Thank you, thank you," said the teacher, almost overcome. "I assure you I appreciate such kindness."

"If you will excuse me now for a few minutes, Mr. Brown," said Fred, "I'll take these to the professor and the other teachers."

"Certainly," replied the teacher, rising to his feet, as if to leave the room.

"Oh, keep your seat, keep your seat," urged Fred, "and while you are smoking have Terry tell you about some of the fun we have had since we left here."

"All right. Just the story I'd like to hear"; and the teacher resumed his seat whilst Fred took up the remaining boxes of cigars and went out.

He soon found the other teachers, to whom he delivered the presents and received many thanks in return, after which he went in search of Professor Lambert. Not finding him anywhere in the building he passed out and went to the cottage, where he found him with his wife and daughter.

"Professor," he said, addressing the stately principal of the academy, "I noticed last year that you were very fond of a good smoke, and have brought you a box of the finest cigars I could find in New York City."

"Ah, indeed, I assure you, my boy, that you couldn't have brought me a more acceptable present if you paid a thousand dollars for it."

"Oh, they didn't cost that much," laughed Fred, as he handed the box to the professor.

"Well, I assure you that I couldn't appreciate the gift more highly, if they had cost ten times that much. My wife and daughter have just been showing me the beautiful presents you brought them. Such things touch our hearts deeply," and the professor extended his hand, giving Fred's a warm grasp that told how sincerely he had spoken. Then he took one of the cigars and proceeded to light it.

After nearly an hour's talk with the professor's family, Fred returned to the dormitory to find all the assistant teachers in his room, puffing their cigars, and listening to Terry's story of their adventures during the vacation. They were roaring with laughter as he entered.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, "where does the laugh come in?"

"Oh, Terry was telling us about the flood," answered Brown.

"The flood! Why, that's one of the oldest stories in the whole world. I don't see anything funny about it at all, unless Noah's boys got up a circus with the monkeys and baboons that had been corraled."

The four teachers roared, with laughter and Brown exclaimed:

"It was the second flood we were laughing about, in which you and Terry were left on shore without your clothes, while the ark disappeared, leaving you in the downpour of rain."

"Oh, that's it, eh? Well, the laugh is on us there, and now that it's all over with I can enjoy it, too; but it was no fun while it lasted. Did he tell you how we shed our skins the next day?"

"Shed your skins!" exclaimed Mr. Tracy, another one of the teachers.

"Yes, we shed our skins like snakes the next day, and it was about a week before we could put on our shirts again."

The astonished teachers looked from him to Terry, and at each other, as though utterly at a loss to understand what it meant, but when Terry explained how they had waded about in the bed of the old pond under the scorching rays of a summer's sun, gathering a harvest of fish, whilst giving no thought to the effect the sun's rays would have on their bare backs, they again roared with laughter, declaring it was the best joke they had ever heard.

"Oh, yes," he laughed. "It's very funny, but we didn't think so at the time."

The teachers remained in the room with the two boys for nearly an hour, the other students keeping out of the way until they left, after which they poured into the room until it was packed to its fullest capacity.

"Great Scott, Fred!" exclaimed Dick Duncan, "you've taken an unfair advantage of us."

"In what way?" Fred asked.

"Oh, you have given the teachers each a box of cigars, and now they'll lick every one of us until we do so, too."

"Oh, I guess not, Dick."

"Well, we'll see," returned Dick, "and if we see things

going that way, we'll blow up the academy and leave in a body."

"Oh, you won't have to resort to dynamite," laughed Fred, "the teachers all understand that Terry and I left last year before the term closed, so it was necessary for us to bring something in the shape of peacemakers, and they worked like a charm, for not one of them had scolded us."

"Oh, that's it, eh?"

"Yes," laughed Fred. "You've played the same trick many a time at home, to escape a licking, haven't you?"

"Yes; I guess I have," acknowledged Dick.

"So have all of us," chimed in Tom Tipps.

Then the boys all had a thousand questions to ask, and Fred and Terry answered many in a way that kept them laughing for nearly an hour. Night came on and the boys returned to their rooms to get ready to go down to supper. Fred had his old place at the table, near Mrs. Lambert, and opposite Eunice. He talked to them both in undertones, keeping them smiling all through the meal.

After supper Fred and Terry, accompanied by Tom, Joe and Dick, went down into the basement to the office of the janitor, where the fine silk handkerchief with the shamrocks on it was presented to him. Terry carried with him Fred's violin. The warm-hearted janitor was almost overcome by the present and the remarks made by Fred as he gave it to him, and he then and there offered to lick the whole school for Fred, any time he thought they needed it.

"Now, Teddy, old man," said Fred, "I bought a violin down in New York, and as you came from Dublin, I'm going to play the 'Rocky Road' for you," and with that he turned up the violin and filled the room with the strains of that rollicking air. Before it was finished Black Pete came tumbling down the stairs crazy for a dance, and dance he did, for Fred played tune after tune, whilst the big porter nearly wore a hole through the flooring with his broad-bottomed brogans.

When the music ceased Pete exclaimed:

"Land sakes! that's the first dance I've had since I come heah."

"You're having a dry time here, eh?" laughed Fred.

"Yes, sah. There ain't no fun heah when you's away."

"Oh, well, we'll make up for it, old man, for I've come back loaded to give you a chance to show what you can do."

CHAPTER III.

FRED AND THE BLACK COLT.

The next day after Fred's arrival at the academy the school opened with pretty near its full complement of students. There were quite a number of new faces among them, but the senior class was the same as during the previous term. Fred resumed his studies with a great deal of enthusiasm, for he was gifted with a memory that aided him greatly in mastering all the problems in every branch from literature to mathematics. When the session was over for the day he went with his classmate down to the boathouse to see how things were down there.

He found that the janitor had kept the boats in good shape and that every oar was intact.

"Let's have a row, boys," he suggested, and four of them at once proceeded to strip for a row up the river, whilst others decided to have a swim. They selected one of the boats, launched it, and Fred, Terry, Joe Jencks and Dick Duncan entered it. They rowed up the river to the Andrews farm, a distance of two miles. As they were about to go back, they saw the old farmer with a rake in his hand, in a field about fifty yards from the river bank.

"Hello!" called Fred to him: "are you going to raise any watermelons for us this year?"

"Yes, if you pay for them," replied the old man.

"All right," laughed Fred. "Put in a few extra hills for me."

"Say, is that you, Fearnot?" the old man called.

"Yes, I'm back again," answered Fred.

"Waal, now, I'm right glad to see you." The old man dropped his rake and started toward the river bank.

"Say, boys," said Terry, "let's go in and chin him awhile," and they turned the boat towards the shore where Fred sprang out on the bank and shook hands with the old farmer, who seemed to be very glad indeed to meet him.

The year before Fred had assisted him in capturing a couple of burglars who had robbed his house, and ever after that he was a welcome guest on the farm.

The other boys shook hands with him, too, whilst Terry remarked that they wanted to keep on good terms with a man who raised such fine watermelons.

"Yes," chuckled the old farmer, "but I've got another dog this year, who won't make good terms with nobody."

"Oh, that's all right," said Terry. "A dog is the easiest thing in the world to poison."

"Yes, I know that," the old man replied, "and it's the easiest thing in the world to poison the seeds of watermelon, and I reckon some of you boys will be mighty sick this summer."

"Say, Mr. Andrews," asked Fred, "how is the wife and the children?"

"All well, thank you. They'll be mighty glad to see you."

"I'll be glad to see them," returned Fred, "and the first chance I get I'll come over."

"Do so, and we'll treat you right. I hear that one of them bank robbers, that you caught, was the same fellow that we caught on the other side of the river."

"Yes," replied Fred, "and he's good for twenty years in State prison."

"Oh, they ought to hang him," replied the farmer. "Such men ain't got no business living."

"Oh, it wouldn't do for everybody to be good, Mr. Andrews."

"Why not?" the old man asked.

"Because we wouldn't have any fun and the lawyers couldn't make a living, and the judges and the sheriff would have to go out of business."

"Let 'em work for a living as I do. Work doesn't hurt nobody."

"There's where you're wrong again," laughed Fred. "A great many people work themselves to death. Many a time you've gone to bed at night so tired that you felt as though you would like to sleep a week."

"Yes, that's so," assented the old fellow; "but if one doesn't work he'll go hungry."

"That depends upon what kind of work he has to do," put in Joe Jencks. "Some men can work very hard all day and earn very little, whilst others can work an hour or two in the day and earn enough to feed them a week."

"Yes, that's so," dryly assented the old man, "but those fellows work on fools. The farmer has to work every hour in the day and sometimes longer."

"Why don't you work on fools, then?" asked Joe.

"Because the fools that are around here haven't got any money. If you've got any I'd like to set in on you right now."

The boys roared with laughter, and voted on the spot that Joe would have to pay for the next supper.

"How came you to put me down as a fool, Mr. Andrews?" Joe asked of the farmer.

"By the fool question you ask me," was the reply.

The old fellow was a pretty shrewd, hard-headed old son of the soil, was quite popular with the boys, although they often raided his melon patch on moonlight nights, and frequently had narrow escapes from his shotgun and dog. He had a very pretty daughter, of the name of Mollie, whom some of the boys suspected of being extremely partial to Fred.

"Say, Mr. Andrews," Fred asked, "have you broken that colt yet, that you showed me when I was here before?"

"Not yet," was the reply; "he will let us put the bridle on him, but nobody can ride him. He threwed Jim last week and nearly broke his neck. He's a beauty though, and I reckon I'll have to hire a horsetamer to break him for me."

"Oh, no need of that; I guess I can ride him," said Fred.

"I guess not. Jim says his back is like a cake of wet soap, which you can slide off quicker than you can on."

"Where is he now?" Fred asked.

"Up in the barn-lot."

"Would you mind my trying him?"

"Yes," replied the old man; "for of all the boys in your school I would be most sorry to see you hurt."

"You couldn't be more sorry than I would be," laughed Fred; "but I'm very fond of horses, and never saw one that I couldn't make friends with. I'd like to see him anyway."

"Well, come on up to the barn," said the old man. "He's as gentle as a kitten, but he don't want anybody on his back."

The party of four boys followed the old man up to the barn, where among several horses was a fine, young two-year-old, almost jet black, with a flowing tail and mane. They entered the lot, and the old man called the colt up to him and patted and rubbed him in a loving sort of way. The colt seemed to enjoy it and submitted, without showing the least objection. Fred procured some oats in his hat, from which he fed the colt, petting him the while.

"He seems gentle enough," he remarked.

"Oh, yes," said Andrews, "he's gentle enough till you get on his back. Then he's Old Nick himself until he gets you off."

"Put a bridle on him, Mr. Andrews, and let me try him."

"You'll get hurt, sure," cautioned the old man.

"I promise you I won't," returned Fred.

"Did you ever break a colt?"

"No, but I've mounted some very vicious horses on my father's place on Long Island."

The old man went to the barn, got a bridle and put it on the colt, throwing the reins over his neck, after which he and the boys got out of the way and left him alone with Fred. Fred patted the colt on the neck, talking to him, and let him eat the oats out of his hat. By and by he laid the hat on the ground, got a good grip on the reins, and suddenly sprang astride of his back. The colt seemed to be very much astonished for a few moments, and began turning around in a circle. Then his heels flew up in the air, until it looked as though Fred would slide down over his neck. Instead of doing so, however, Fred had a firm grip on his mane with one hand, whilst he locked his feet under the colt's foreleg, thus keeping a firm seat, from which he could not be shaken. The next moment the colt stood upon his hind feet, almost straight up as a gate post, and again Fred held on as though he was a part of the animal himself.

Seeing he could not shake him off by rearing or plunging, the colt darted around the barn lot with the speed of a deer. Two of the boys, fearful of being run over, dashed for the gate, and as they passed through left it open. The colt darted through and sped away down the road at a breakneck speed.

"Lord bless my soul!" gasped the old farmer, "he'll kill the boy."

"Not much he won't," laughed Terry. "He is on to stay, and the only way he can get him off is for him to lie down with him."

"He'll throw him, sure," asserted the farmer, "and break half the bones in his body."

By that time Fred and the colt had disappeared from sight down the road, and the old farmer was in a sweat of suspense and regret.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed, "I shouldn't have let him do that."

"Don't worry about Fred, Mr. Andrews; he was born lucky, and isn't afraid of anything in the shape of man or beast."

"But he won't know that colt. Tell you he's a bad one," and he started to hitch up another one of the horses for the purpose of following after Fred, confident that he would find him either dead or nearly so, somewhere along the road.

"Wait awhile, Mr. Andrews. Give him a chance," said Terry. "I never saw Fred manage a horse, but I'll bet all the clothes I've got that he gets the best of that colt."

The boys persuaded the old man to wait awhile and, as they stood out in front of the gate looking down the road, his wife came out and he told her what happened.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," she exclaimed. "What did you do such a foolish thing for?"

"Here he come," said Terry, as he caught a glimpse of the black colt nearly a quarter of a mile down the road.

"Waah, I waa!" exclaimed Andrews, "if that thar colt ain't trotting along just like an old horse!"

And so he was.

When Fred rode up to the gate of the farmhouse, where stood the farmer and the boys, the colt was covered with foam and blowing tremendously. He dismounted, handed the reins to the old farmer, saying:

"Anybody can ride him now."

"How did you do it?" Andrews asked.

"By sticking on his back. Just as soon as he found he couldn't get me off, he went along as gentle as a kitten. The stableman on my father's place says that if you prove a thing to a horse he'll believe it. I proved it to him, that he couldn't get rid of me, and he quickly accepted it as an accomplished fact."

"Well! well! well!" ejaculated Andrews. "I wouldn't have believed it. It'll save me ten dollars in hiring a horse-tamer to break him."

"Oh, no," laughed Fred, "it'll just save you five dollars; for when your melons are ripe we boys want five dollars' worth of the best in the patch."

"By gum, you can have all you can eat, with pumpkins, squashes and cucumbers thrown in;" and the old fellow grasped his hand and shook it with a great deal of enthusiasm.

"Better not say that," laughed Fred, "for we four boys can eat more watermelons in one season, than a hundred coons could in a year."

"Oh, that's all right," laughed the farmer; "you can have all you can eat, but you must come up here to eat 'em. I don't mean for you to come up and get a boatload every day and take them down for the whole school."

At that moment the farmer's daughter appeared on the porch with her mother, very neatly dressed. She had hurried to her room to perfect her toilet as soon as she heard that Fred was on the place, and now she was all smiles and looking really very attractive.

"Hello," Fred greeted, raising his hat, laughing and bowing, "you were too late to see the fun."

"I'm glad I didn't see it," she replied, "for it was very, very dangerous. He nearly killed Brother Jim yesterday."

Fred opened the gate and went up to the porch to shake hands with her, whilst the farmer and the boys returned to the barn-lot with the colt.

"It was a wild ride for awhile," he said, explaining to her and her mother, "but I kept him in the middle of the road and let him run till he had enough of it. For awhile I thought he would keep right on into town, but he came to a stop finally and then I turned his head back this way. He has fine speed and rides as easy as a rocking-chair. If he is trained properly he will turn out one of the best saddle-horses in the country."

"He belongs to me," said Mollie, "and I am ever so glad you have conquered him, though I fear I will never have the courage to attempt to ride him."

"Well, I wouldn't advise you to," said he, "until he has been trained a little."

"But who in the world can train him?" she asked.

"Well, if you don't mind," he replied, "I'll try to run up once a week and see what I can do with him."

"Oh, I would be so glad if you would. I can ride one of the other horses, while you ride him, until he becomes perfectly gentle under the saddle."

"Yes, that would be fun for me," laughed Fred, "for you could train me while I'd be training him."

"Train you?" she laughed.

"Yes—I'm something of a wild colt myself."

"Oh, yes, you're awful wild. We all know about you here in Avon, and like your wild ways, but you can rest assured I'd never attempt to train you, for you don't need it."

"That's all you know about boys," laughed Fred. "If you ask your mother you'll find she can give you a great many points."

Whereupon Mrs. Andrews laughed till she shook like a bowl of jelly.

CHAPTER IV.

"GIVE ME FIVE HUNDRED AND YOU CAN HAVE IT."

Fred's success in breaking the untamed colt for old Farmer Andrews gave him a wonderful prestige among the boys of the academy, for those who were with him at the time told the story with a great many embellishments, and of course the old farmer and his son Jim, to say nothing of his wife and daughter, had their stories to tell, and so it gradually became known throughout the town, and forthwith he was rated as an expert horse-tamer.

He was not aware of that fact, however, until a week later, when he went over into the town with Terry and Dick Duncan. Many who knew him, greeted him cordially, among whom was a merchant, who laughingly suggested to him, that when he finished his studies at school he could do a fine business by setting up a horse-taming establishment in Avon.

"But I don't know anything about taming horses," replied Fred.

"The deuce you don't! Why, it's the talk of the town that you tamed old man Andrews' colt and made him as gentle as a kitten."

"Oh, that's all right," he laughed. "The old man said I couldn't ride him, and I merely wanted to show him that I could, and that's all there is to it."

"Well," laughed the merchant, "you've gained a wonderful reputation from it, anyway."

"Well, that's funny. I suppose if a man was to give a double sneeze they'd set him up as the sneezer of Avon. It's a great place for reputation."

While he was talking with the merchant a man came up and said to Fred:

"Say! Davis has just sent a man over to the academy after you."

"What for?" Fred asked.

"He swapped horses with a man two days ago and the horse he got in the trade goes backwards every time they put harness on him, and he wants you to try your hand in breaking him from the habit."

"Great Scott!" gasped Fred, and the merchant roared with laughter.

"What a fall!" laughed Terry.

"Yes," put in Dick, "you'll be a horse-tamer next."

"Oh, that's all right," said the man; "come on down to the livery stable and see Davis' horse."

"Hanged if I do," said Fred. "I don't know anything about horses."

"The deuce you don't. Didn't you break Andrews' colt?"

"Yes; but I had to do it to keep him from breaking me. If that horse of Davis' goes backwards every time they put the harness on him, tell him to hitch him between the shafts tail end foremost, and if he wants to travel that way, let him go."

The crowd laughed at the idea, but Davis' man said that it was generally the rule to have a horse travel headforemost instead of tailforemost.

"Yes, I know," retorted Fred, "but a novelty like that will pay. If he can teach him to travel at a two-forty gait tailforemost he's got a gold mine in him."

"Say, Fred," said Terry, "let's go down there and see that horse. Maybe there's some fun in him."

"Yes," chimed in Dick, "let's go down and see what you can do with him," and the two took him by the arm and led him away. He protested that he never had anything to do with a balking horse in his life.

"Well, let's go down and see him balk."

He went along with them, and the merchant who first spoke to him on the subject of horses went along also, leaving his store in charge of his clerk. Others soon heard of it on the street, and soon there were upwards of fifty people at Davis' livery stable, anxious to see what method he would pursue in breaking the horse from the habit of balking. Fred was acquainted with the stableman, and the two shook hands when they met, for Fred had often hired horses from him.

"Look here, Davis," he said, "do you take me for a horse-tamer?"

"Why, somebody told me that you could tame the wildest horse that ever lived. I heard that you broke Andrews' colt in thirty minutes. I swapped horses with a man two or three days ago, and thought I was up to all the tricks in the business, but I'm blest if I ain't stuck with the worst balking horse I ever saw in my life. I've worn out two whips on him and he goes backwards in spite of all I can do. Then he lies down in the harness."

"Why don't you skin him and sell his hide?" Fred asked.

"Because I'd lose about a hundred dollars that way."

"Well, he'd soon eat up a hundred dollars' worth of feed. Where is he? Let me look at him."

Davis led the way to a stall in which stood a large bay horse, who looked pretty much like any other horse would. He backed him out from the stall and had a set of harness put on him and hitched to a buggy, in the yard at the rear of the stable.

"I want to show you what he does," said Davis, seating himself in the buggy and tapping the horse with the whip. The horse at once began backing until he had pushed the buggy half way around the yard. Fred and the boys laughed heartily, for the more Davis lashed the horse, the more the animal backed. Two of the stablemen took hold of the bit and tried to pull him forward, but he was too much for both of them and still kept backing.

Suddenly the idea occurred to Fred to tie a rope around the horse's neck and fasten it to another horse also in harness.

"I guess I can make him go forward," he called out to Davis.

"Well, let's see you do it."

"Got a rope?" Fred asked.

"Yes."

"Well, let's have it then."

The stablemen brought out a rope about twenty feet long.

"Tie it around his neck," Fred ordered, and the stableman did so.

"Now bring out another horse," he said to the stableman, "with a harness on him that you can fasten this rope to."

"What are you going to do?" Davis asked.

"Why, I want another horse that can pull him around the yard here."

The crowd laughed heartily at the idea and Davis sang out:

"Thunder! I don't want two horses to do the work of one."

"No, of course not," laughed Fred. "What you want to do is to teach this one that you can make him go forward whether he wants to or not, or his blessed head will come off. You see, horses are a good deal like men, they don't like to give up until they have to."

It struck the crowd as being exceedingly funny, and they laughed heartily at it; but the other horse was brought out, the rope was fastened to the harness, and they stood in readiness for the test.

"Now, touch him up with your whip," suggested Fred to Davis, who was still seated in the buggy behind the balking horse.

Davis gathered up the reins and touched up the horse, who simply shook his head defiantly. Then he tapped him with a whip and instead of going forward the horse began backing. Fred sprang forward, seized the foremost horse by the bit and started him off. The rope stretched just as straight as a rifle barrel, and for a time it looked as though the head of the balking horse would part from his neck; but just a moment or two later he yielded to superior force and went trotting around the yard as though he had never balked in all his life.

The crowd cheered and laughed, in which Fred and his schoolmates joined. After making the circuit of the yard two or three times, Fred unhitched the foremost horse and wrapped the rope around the neck of the balking one.

"Now, see if he'll go it alone," he said to Davis.

Davis started him up, and he went trotting around the yard like any other well regulated horse would do. The crowd again cheered and Fred's reputation as a horse-tamer and trainer rose one hundred per cent. Suddenly the horse stopped and began balking again.

"Hitch him to the other horse," called Fred; and again the other horse pulled on the rope. The balker made a desperate effort to free himself, threatening to smash the buggy, but had to yield to superior force, and once more he went trotting around the yard as before.

"I guess you'll find him all right now," remarked Fred, "as we have proved it to him that we can make him go, whether he wishes to or not, and that's all you have to do with a man, mule or jackass."

"Say," sang out Davis, while the crowd were laughing,

"did you ever see a horse broken of balking that way before?"

"No; never did."

"Why did you do it, then?"

"Merely to show the horse that I could make him go whether he wanted to or not; and from what I know about the disposition of horses I think that's all you'll have to do to him."

"Waal, I swan!" exclaimed an old farmer in the crowd, "I'm going to try that on a horse of mine just as soon as I get home!"

"All right," laughed Fred. "If you've got a son or daughter who balks and kicks, try it on them, too."

They unhitched the foremost horse, and Davis drove out through the stables into the streets, and all around the town. When he returned to the stable, he said he believed that the horse was thoroughly broken of the balking habit.

"What do I owe you, Fearnot?" he asked of Fred.

"Not a cent," Fred laughed, "except to stand up in the buggy there, take off your hat and acknowledge to the crowd that a greenhorn schoolboy knows more about horses than you do."

"By George, I'll do it," said Davis, and he did.

The crowd yelled and laughed.

"Now, see here, Fearnot," said Davis, "whenever you want a horse for a ride or a drive, come here and get it, and it shan't cost you a cent."

"All right," laughed Fred, "but don't put any balking horse on me, for I should hate like thunder to have my best girl with me when he begins any of his monkey business."

"All right: I'll give you the finest rig I have in the stable every time. But look here, I've got another horse who is too confoundedly free with his heels. He'll kick at a fly. He has smashed two dashboards and a——"

"Oh, look here, now," cried Fred, interrupting him, "one lesson a day is enough."

"Oh, I'm willing to pay for the lesson," said Davis, and he ordered one of his stablemen to bring out a vicious-looking horse who laid both ears back, whilst the crowd got out of his way. Fred looked at the horse and saw that he was about as vicious an animal as he had ever seen. He took up the whip, touched the horse in the flank with it, and both heels flew out with the force of a ton of dynamite.

"He's a bad one," he laughed.

"Yes," assented Davis, "the worst I ever saw."

"Fasten that rope to his halter," Fred suggested to the stableman, and the rope was transferred from the neck of the balker to the iron ring on the halter of the kicker.

"Now, run the rope around his hind foot and fasten the other end to the ring."

The stableman managed to do as he was told without being kicked, and then Fred again touched the horse in the flank with the lash of the whip. The horse kicked with vicious energy and got the full force of it himself, for it jerked his head between his two forelegs with a suddenness that nearly threw him down. A more astonished-looking animal was never seen than he was. The crowd roared with laughter and again Fred tickled him with the whip-lash. Again he kicked with the same result, but the third time he stood the tickling without moving.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Davis, "that trick is worth a thousand dollars to me."

"Give me five hundred and you can have it," laughed Fred.

The crowd again laughed, but Davis failed to take the hint. He devoted ten minutes to trying to make the horse kick again, but the latter had enough of it.

"It's as simple as A, B, C," said Davis.

"Of course it is," assented Fred. "The whole principle lies in the fact that a horse knows a few things himself, and he can be taught a lesson just as well as a man can, if you give it to him the right way. If a horse finds out that when he kicks he gets the blow himself, he won't be so free with his heels, and the rule holds good with any other domestic animal. If you sprinkle red pepper on the backs of the sheep that are exposed to the attacks of wolves, a wolf will only take one bite of it, and he'll tell all the other wolves that mutton isn't good, anyway."

"Gosh all hemlock," exclaimed a farmer in the crowd, "that do beat all creation! Young man, can you tell me how to stop a hen from crowing?"

"Yes," laughed Fred. "Have you got one that crows?"

"Yes," replied the farmer, "and my wife says she is an abomination in the sight of the Lord."

"Well, tell your wife to eat that hen for dinner next Sunday, for when anything of the feminine gender throughout the whole animal kingdom gets the idea into her head that she belongs to the other sex, she is past all redemption. Cut her head off."

The crowd roared and laughed, and everybody invited everybody else to go to the hotel for a drink.

"Gosh," said the farmer, "I've learned more to-day from a beardless boy, than ever I knew before in my life, an' I'm sixty years old."

"Have you got a good watermelon patch?" Fred asked.

"You bet I have!"

"Well, when they get ripe we boys will come out there and show you how to save the seed for your next year's crop."

"All right," laughed the farmer. "I guess I raise the biggest melons in the county."

"Oh, we won't stop to weigh them," laughed Fred; "we'll simply show you a new way to transfer them from the vegetable to the animal kingdom."

CHAPTER V.

THE "ESCAPED LUNATIC" AND WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM.

When the boys left the livery stable to return to the academy, they declared they had more fun with the horses than anything else they had run up against in a long time.

"I guess I'm in for it," remarked Fred; "but I'm blest if I can understand how I happened to strike it as I did, for I never before saw a horse broken from the balking habit, nor from kicking."

"How did you happen to think of it, then?" Terry asked.

"Oh, I happened to remember what I heard an old fellow say one time about a dog, and that was a dog never tackled the second time another that had once licked him, because he had a memory that never let him forget the lesson he had learned; so the thought occurred to me when

I saw those two men pulling at that bit, and were pulled back by the horse instead, that the same principle would hold good with him as with the dog, and now I suppose that all sorts of old horses and mules with bad habits will be brought to me to be treated."

"It's a good joke," laughed Terry.

"Yes," assented Fred, "we had some fun, but I guess it will cease to be funny after a while."

When they reached the academy, Terry and Dick told the other members of the class of the fun they had over at Davis' livery stable, and before bedtime pretty near all of the boys in the school had the story. Assistant Teacher Brown asked Fred about it, and was surprised when the latter told him that he had never before in his life tried to break any horse of a habit.

The next day Eunice Lambert, on meeting Fred, remarked:

"I hear you are a horse-trainer."

"Oh, you can hear anything in this school," he laughed.

"Oh, I didn't hear it from the boys," she replied. "I heard it from a lady over in town, that you were giving Mollie Andrews riding lessons."

"You are misinformed then," he returned, "for I have done nothing of the kind. Her father has a colt, which her brother tried to ride and was badly hurt. I rode him after a hard fight, and ever since then everybody in and out of the school has been talking about it."

"But haven't you been riding with her?" Eunice asked.

"Yes, once," he replied. "You see the old man is raising a big lot of watermelons this year, and we boys have got our eyes on that patch," and Fred winked as he made the explanation.

"Oh, yes," she laughed, with a toss of her head, "a watermelon patch and a pretty girl is a very attractive combination."

The professor's daughter was deeply interested in Fred, and it was extremely difficult for her to conceal the fact that she was jealous of his attentions to Mollie Andrews. Fred was about to make further explanation, when Eunice's mother entered the room and the opportunity was lost. He exchanged greetings with Mrs. Lambert, and then turned away to go in quest of Terry.

"I wonder what she means by hitting at me that way," Fred asked himself. "What does she care if I do go up the river to see Mollie Andrews?" and he was thinking deeply on the subject when he ran across Tom Tipps, who called out to him:

"Say, Fred, we boys are going on a tramp late this afternoon, and want you to go with us."

"Where are you going?"

"About four miles up the Rock Hill road."

"What's up there to be seen?" Fred asked.

"There's a bee tree over there which some countrymen are going to cut down, and there's to be a gathering of men and women, boys and girls, to eat honey. Dick says that if the bees happen to get in among the girls there'll be some fun that would be worth going ten miles to see."

"I should say so," laughed Fred. "Count me in. I wouldn't miss it for anything."

"All right. We'll be off just as soon as Mr. Tracy gets through with our class."

At about three o'clock that afternoon nearly a dozen of

the boys slipped away from the academy grounds and passed through a small patch of woods some three hundred yards in width, and emerged into what was called the Rock Hill road. They trudged along laughing and chatting, only as a lot of schoolboys could, until they were within a half mile of the place where the bee tree was said to be, but none of those in the party knew exactly where it was. They stopped at a farmhouse and inquired of an old lady if she could tell them where the bee tree was that was to be cut down that afternoon.

"Yes," she replied, "it's away out in them woods over there," and she pointed in the direction of a woods that could be seen over on the other side of a wide piece of cleared land.

"How can we get there?" Fred asked.

"I dunno," she replied, "unless you walk."

"Bless you," he laughed, "we expect to walk it, as we have no wings; but is there any road that leads to it?"

"No, there ain't," she answered. "There's a big crowd of them over there now, and some went round the field on that side, and some on the other," and she pointed in two directions as she spoke, indicating the route taken by those who had preceded them.

"Can't we go across that field straight over there?" Fred asked.

"I reckon you can, but Mr. Adams don't like to have people crossing his field. He's got signs up all around it, telling people to keep out of it."

"Oh, well, I guess we won't hurt the field going across it. We are much obliged to you, madam," and with that he bowed to the old lady, and the boys turned away and started up the road again.

"Say, fellows," called out Joe Jencks, "I bet we can save about half a mile by crossing this field, so what's the use of going around it?"

"Let's do it, then," suggested several of the others, and forthwith the entire party sprang over the fence and started for the woods on the other side of the field, a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile away. They had nearly reached the other side, when they saw a farmer running towards them, with a whip in his hand, his trousers stuffed in his boots, and minus a coat.

"I guess that's old Adams," remarked Joe Jencks.

"Shouldn't wonder," said Fred, "but as we are nearly across his field, we'll keep right straight on and tell him that we'll get out of it just as fast as we can."

"Here there," said the farmer, as he ran up to the party of boys, "what are you doing in my field?"

Fred, who was a little in advance of the others, answered him, saying:

"We're going to the bee tree over there in the woods."

"Waal, you ain't got any business on my land, so every one of you go right straight back where you came from."

"We can get off of your land a great deal quicker by going forward than by going backward," Fred replied.

"No, you don't! You go right straight back to the road," and with that the farmer advanced still closer to the boys, assuming as he did so a rather belligerent attitude.

"Well, look here," returned Fred, "since you've ordered us off of your land we have a right to get off of it in the

quickest way possible: so we'll go right straight on to the woods."

"But that's my land, too," said Adams, "so you go back to the road."

"Hanged if I do," growled Fred. "Come on, boys," and he started forward, followed by the others.

"No, you won't," yelled the farmer, running forward and planting himself directly in Fred's path. "You go back to the road or I'll wear this whip out on you."

Without making any reply, Fred kept on.

Boiling with rage the man cut him with his whip, and the next moment Fred seized him around the waist, raised him off his feet and hurled him to the ground, exclaiming as he did so:

"Touch me again and I'll make you wish you had never been born!"

The whip had fallen from the man's hands, so when he rose to his feet, he picked up a stone weighing five pounds or more and hurled it at Fred with all his might. Fred dodged it nimbly and rushed at him to trip him up; but the horny-handed son of toil was so much larger and heavier than he, that he would inevitably have gotten the worst of it, had not the boys rushed in to his assistance, seized the infuriated farmer, and threw him down and sat on him.

"Say, boys," said Terry, "he's an escaped lunatic. Let's tie him up and take him to town."

"I ain't no lunatic," protested the farmer, struggling to free himself from their grasp.

"Oh, yes, you are!" said Terry. "No sane man would make such a fool of himself as you have. What's your name and where did you come from?"

"My name's Adams, and this is my land you're on."

"Adams, Adams," said Terry, as if trying to recall the name, "why, hang it, there's a reward offered for your arrest. You got away from the asylum a few days ago, and the superintendent has offered a hundred dollars reward for your capture. I believe I've got the paper here in my pocket. Hold him, boys, while I look and see," and Terry deliberately took a newspaper from his pocket, opened it, and after glancing over two or three pages, called out:

"Here it is. I knew I was right," and proceeded to read an account of the escape of a lunatic from the State asylum, of the name of Adams, who formerly lived in the neighborhood of Avon, on a farm. It gave an accurate description of the man the boys were holding, and offered a reward of one hundred dollars for his capture and safe delivery at the asylum.

The boys seemed to be deeply interested, and by desperate efforts managed to look serious, although they knew Terry was making up the story which he pretended to read in the paper. A more astonished man than was Adams at that moment, as he listened to the story as read by Terry, would be hard to find anywhere in the State. For a while he actually doubted his own identity, but he finally blurted out that he wasn't crazy, had never been in the asylum in his life.

"Oh, that's all right," said Terry. "We don't expect you to own up. We'll take you back to the asylum anyhow, and if you're not the right man they'll turn you loose, but we know that you are crazy, whether you're the right one

or not, for nobody but an idiot would do as you've done. We've got to get a rope, boys, and tie him up."

Adams made a desperate effort to get away, but the boys fairly wiped up the ground with him. They pulled him in four directions at once, stood him on his head and handled him altogether so roughly that he said he would give up and let them take him.

"Oh, you're coming to your senses, are you?" said Terry. "If you are, we'll let you go. We don't want to carry you to the asylum if you're not crazy."

"I tell you I'm not crazy."

"All right, then, we want you to prove it by going home and staying there and behaving yourself, for if you show up again to-day we'll tie you up, put a gag in your mouth and ship you to the asylum. Now, what do you say? Will you go home?"

"Yes," replied Adams, who was in a frame of mind to make any promise to get out of their clutches.

"Let go of him, boys," said Terry, and the boys released him, whereupon he took up his whip and his hat and struck out for home in an opposite direction from where the boys were going in searching for the bee tree.

As soon as he was out of hearing the boys began to chuckle, and they chuckled and chuckled until some of them were almost unable to keep on their feet. They reached the woods, and soon heard the voices of a crowd of men and boys around the great bee tree, which had been found in the depths of the forest. When they reached there they discovered a party of nearly fifty people, upwards of twenty of whom were women and girls.

"Waal, I swan!" exclaimed an old farmer, on seeing Fred, "if there ain't that thar horse-tamer," and he came forward, shook hands with Fred, and soon had the entire crowd around him, eager to see the youth who could manage a horse as easily as a man could put a hat on his head.

It seemed that the old farmer had told a wonderful story of how Fred had broken a horse from balking, and another one from kicking, in Davis' stable, in Avon.

Of course, that recognition by the old farmer insured a hearty welcome to the party of schoolboys, and they were promised all the honey they could eat or carry away.

"Where is the bee tree?" Fred asked.

It was pointed out to him, and as he looked up at the giant of the forest, he saw a great swarm of bees around a knothole some fifty feet above the ground.

"Say, young man," called the farmer, "do you know anything about bees?"

"Only two things," he replied. "One is that they make honey, and another that they can sting."

"Waal, now," answered the farmer, "you can break a horse from kicking, but can you break a bee from stinging?"

"Bet your life I can," said Fred.

"How?" the old man asked.

"Catch one and bring it here and I'll show you."

"Gosh ding it, I don't catch no bees."

"Oh, well, then, I can't show you unless you do."

"Suppose you tell us how?"

"All right, just catch your bee and pull his sting out, and he'll never sting again."

"That's so, begosh," laughed the farmer, as the crowd around him yelled.

The men then went at the tree with their axes and began cutting it down, whilst the old farmer introduced Fred to several of the buxom country girls, and he in turn introduced the other boys. Soon they were all laughing and chatting, as though they had known each other for years.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DUEL IN THE OLD FARMYARD.

While the men were cutting down the big tree, Fred and the boys were having a jolly time with the girls. They cracked jokes, told stories and even sang songs. Of course the country boys were more or less out of joint, and they could not hold their hand with the students. The girls would not look at them, as long as the students were around. Some three or four of the prettiest girls in the party managed to corral Fred and Terry, and their silvery laughter rang through the forest, accompanied by the steady blows of the axes on the trunk of the great tree.

Finally warning was given by some of the older men that the tree was about to fall.

"Oh, my!" exclaimed one of the rustic beauties. "We must get away from here, for the bees get awful mad when their hive is cut down."

"Well, let's get away," suggested Fred, "for I much prefer the society of you girls to the bees."

"But we don't make any honey," remarked one of the girls, a very saucy miss of seventeen.

"You don't need to," returned Fred; "you're sweet enough without it."

"Oh, my," she laughed, "a bee ought to sting you."

"Oh, you don't mean that," laughed Fred. "If a bee were to sting me I'd be sure to say something bad."

"I'm afraid I would, too," returned the girl. "I know I'd holler."

The party of young people moved away to a distance of nearly a hundred yards from the tree, and about ten minutes later it came down with a roar and a crash that shook the very ground. Then the bees poured out by the thousands and tens of thousands, and scattered about through the woods in search of something upon which to vent their wrath.

The men who were to procure the honey had tied mosquito netting over their hats, around their necks, and with gloves that covered their arms almost to their elbows, proceeded at once to gather the coveted prize. The bees swarmed upon them until they were literally covered. They were old hands at the business, and worked steadily for upwards of an hour before they could get well at the honey. There were pails and pans in abundance on hand, and soon many of them were filled with huge pieces of unbroken comb. One of them carried a large dishpan full of it out to an open space, set it down on the ground, and went back to the tree, with a thousand angry bees swarming around him.

"There's your honey," he called out to the crowd of girls and boys.

"Yes, there it is," laughed Fred, "but there's a few bees standing guard over it, I think."

"Oh, my," called out one of the girls. "My mouth is just watering for some of that honey."

"Hanged if I don't get some of it," said Joe Jencks, starting towards the pan.

"Better cut a brush to fan the bees off," suggested one of the girls, who had seen bee trees cut down before.

"All right," said Joe, drawing his knife, and cutting a brush from one of the bushes.

"Say, Joe," called out Terry, "bring the pan back with you."

"All right," returned Joe, going up to within a few paces of the pan.

At that moment a man with a gun in his hand emerged from the bushes a few paces beyond where the pan had been placed.

It was Farmer Adams, who leveled his gun at Joe, blurting out, as he did so:

"Gosh ding you, I've got you now. Just hold up your hands and march off to town. If I don't land you in jail, my name ain't Hezekiah Adams."

Joe was staggered. He knew that not one of the boys was armed with anything more effective than an ordinary pocketknife, while the old man was there with a double-barreled shotgun.

"That's all right, sir," he said, holding his hands above his head, while he stood trembling in his shoes for fear the finger would pull too hard on the trigger.

"You bet it's all right," said Adams; "I'll get one of you, if I can't get no more."

Adams had scarcely ceased speaking when half a dozen bees went straight at him, hitting him in the face. He jumped back and attempted to fan them off, and the next moment both barrels of the gun went off, sending the charges almost straight up in the air. The gun fell to the ground, whilst the farmer began a series of acrobatic performances that set the boys in a roar.

Instead of picking up the pan Joe dashed forward and secured the gun, whilst Terry and Fred made a break for the honey, which they got without being stung, as the little insects with the hot tails were turning their attention to Adams.

"Come ahead," cried Terry to the crowd, running farther away from the place, followed by the party of boys and girls, screaming with laughter.

They reached the edge of the timber where, under a huge tree, they sat down to feast on the prize they had secured. Every one in the crowd secured a chunk of honey-comb and began eating, and soon boys and girls alike were feasting on the sweets with dripping hands.

"Say, Joe," called Terry, "how did you feel when the old man drew the gun on you?"

"I thought I was a goner," replied Joe. "If he'd told me to stand on my head I would have done so."

"What did you do with the gun?" Fred asked.

"Hid it under a log."

There were nearly twenty in the party around the big pan of honey, not one of whom gave any thought to the industrious manufacturers of it. They little dreamed that bees can smell honey a mile away, even against the wind; so it is not to be wondered that they soon found where the pan of honey was. The first intimation of their presence came in the shape of a scream from one of the girls.

An angry bee had struck her on the neck and the next moment she clapped her hands, all smeared with honey, on the spot where she had been stung. Half a minute later Dick Duncan sprang about five feet in the air and let out a yell that would have shamed a Comanche Indian.

"Wow!" yelled another one of the boys, followed by a scream from one of the girls.

"Boys," laughed Fred, "we've got to skip, and I guess the best way is to break through the bushes," and the whole crowd scattered, leaving the pan of honey where they had placed it, under the shade of a wide-spreading oak. All through the bushes the girls were heard laughing, and occasionally yelling as a bee struck them. Two of them dashed from their place of refuge and joined Fred, under a clump of bushes, where he was watching the pan of honey, some fifty feet away.

"That's right, girls," he laughed, "stick to me and I won't want any honey."

"Oh, my," cried one of the girls, "I've been stung twice."

"They haven't got me yet," laughed her companion, "but I'm afraid they will before I can get away."

"Just keep perfectly still," suggested Fred, "and if a bee lights on you, knock him off as quick as lightning. I am watching that old sow out there," and he called the girls' attention to a sow with two half-grown pigs approaching the pan of honey. Just as she stuck her nose into the pan one of the pigs gave a squeal and began spinning around like a top. The next moment the sow and the other pigs joined in the circus. About fifty bees had tackled them, and they made straight for the clump of bushes into which Fred and the two girls had sought refuge.

"Run for it!" yelled Fred, dashing away through the bushes at the top of his speed, with the girls close behind him.

To his utter amazement, the sow and pigs kept straight on after them, as if their only hope lay in keeping company with them.

"Girls, we must go over the fence!" he sang out to the two rustie beauties, and suiting his actions to his words, he turned and bounded over the fence that separated the woods from the cleared field. He found that the girls were as quick at fence climbing as himself, and when they joined him, he remarked:

"I can stand the bees, or I could stand the hogs, but when they both come after me together, I beg to be excused."

One of the girls was laughing, the other on the verge of crying, for she had been stung twice, once on the neck and on her hand.

"I guess we'd better go up to the house by the road," he suggested to them.

"Yes," said one of the girls, "I know Mrs. Green."

"Then come on," and he led the way across the field, straight over to the house, where a couple of hours before he and the boys had inquired the way to the bee tree. As they entered the gate, one of the girls called out:

"Oh, Mrs. Green, the bees were perfectly awful! I've been stung twice. Can't you do something to stop the pain?"

"Yes," said the motherly woman. "Come in," and the

two girls ran into the house, leaving Fred out in the yard. He turned and went to the well to get a drink of water, as well as wash his hands, both of which were besmeared with honey.

He had quenched his thirst, bathed his hands, and was wiping them with his handkerchief, when he heard some one rush out of the house with an angry exclamation. He wheeled around and saw a man coming at him whose face was swollen almost out of shape.

"Gosh ding you!" hissed the man, "I've got you whar there ain't no other boys to help you!" and he made a dash at Fred, who dodged around the curb of the well.

"What's the matter with you?" Fred asked, "and what have you got against me?"

The man chased him around the well half a dozen times without making any reply, but he was growling and muttering all the time.

"What's the matter with you?" Fred demanded the second time.

"Oh, just let me get hold of you, and you'll soon know what's the matter with me."

Just then Mrs. Green called from the piazza of the house:

"Oh, Mr. Adams, do let the boy alone! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Fred, who really hadn't recognized the man on account of his swollen face, caused by bee stings, "why don't you tackle the bees instead of me?"

"One at a time," replied the farmer, still making desperate efforts to catch him, but as the curbing of the well was about six feet square, Fred's agility enabled him to keep out of his reach.

"Say," laughed Fred, when he was fully convinced that he could keep from being caught, "you really ought to go to town and have your picture taken. You're the handsomest man I ever saw."

Adams fairly howled his rage when he found Fred laughing at and making fun of him. He suddenly stopped chasing him and began looking around for a weapon of some kind. Fred did so, too, for he saw that the old fellow was now really in an insane rage, and hardly responsible for his actions. The old man ran clear around behind the house, disappearing from sight for two or three minutes, during which time Fred made a break for the woodhouse, which he saw a little way off in the opposite direction. There he found an axe, and was about to pick it up when he saw an axe handle standing in the corner, which had recently been made.

"Just the thing I want," he exclaimed, seizing it and running back towards the well. He had scarcely gained it when he saw Adams returning with a hoe handle which he had found behind the main house.

"Now I'll bring him to his senses," said Fred to himself, "for I'll wager all the clothes I have that he doesn't know the A, B, C. of fencing;" so he met the farmer half way between the house and the well.

"Now, gosh ding you!" yelled Adams, "I've got you!" and he aimed a blow at Fred's head that would have felled an ox. To his astonishment Fred skillfully parried the blow, and gave him a crack with the axe handle, that made him see a thousand stars. He aimed blow after blow at him, grasping the hoe handle with both hands. It was

parried, and he got another crack. Fred could have easily downed him, but he didn't wish to hurt him. A third time he rushed at Fred, with the hoe handle raised high in the air with both hands, bringing it down straight, in the direction of Fred's head. It was easily parried, and a third time he got the axe handle on his head with such force as to cause him to drop to his knees. Fred waited for him to get up, and when he did so, instead of rushing at him, he leaned on the hoe handle and glared, rubbed his eyes, one of which was almost closed from the effect of the bee stings. The old lady and the two girls were standing on the piazza, watching the fight.

"You haven't got me yet," Fred quietly remarked.

"Oh, Mr. Adams, do please stop!" cried Mrs. Green, wringing her hands in great nervous excitement.

"Oh, he isn't doing anything, madam," laughed Fred. "Let him alone. It amuses him and doesn't hurt me."

"Say, young fellow," said Adams, "what's your name?"

"Oh, never mind my name," laughed Fred. "I'm only a schoolboy who came out here to get a taste of that honey, and ran up against the meanest man in the whole country."

"That's me, I s'pose?" observed Adams.

"Yes, that's you, for you're both the meanest and the ugliest man I ever laid eyes on, and if it were not for the presence of those ladies there I would thrash you within an inch of your life! You might strike at me all day with that hoe handle and you couldn't hit me."

"Well, I don't want to hit you," said Adams.

"Glad to hear it; hope you'll be a better man after this. If you can find your way home you had better go, for my schoolmates are coming across the field now, and they might not let you off so easy."

Adams looked away across the field and saw Terry and the other boys coming on a run, having been driven out of the woods by the bees. He dropped the hoe handle, and without uttering a word farther, opened the gate and passed out, going down the road in the direction of his home, about as fast as he could walk.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOAT-CLUB CHALLENGE.

"Say, boys," cried Fred, as they entered the yard of the Widow Green's place, "did you get all the honey you wanted?"

"Yes," laughed Terry, "and there are over a million of bees hunting around for us down there. I believe every one of them except me got stung. I'll tell you it was a circus to see 'em jump."

The boys crowded around the well, eager for a drink of water after their feast of honey, and to wash the sticky stuff from their hands. Not one of them had seen Adams slipping away from the place as they approached. Some of them were guying Joe Jencks about the alacrity with which he held up his hands when the old man leveled a gun on him.

"Oh, that's all right, boys," said Fred. "Joe had a level head on him when he found himself face to face with the muzzle of a double-barreled shotgun. I'd have held up my hands, too."

"So would I," put in Terry; "for the old fool was just mad enough to shoot."

"Of course he was; he was crazy mad."

"I wonder what became of him?" Dick Duncan asked.

"Hanged if I know," one of the other boys answered; "the last I saw of him he was rushing through the bushes like a mad steer."

"Oh, he came right up here," cried one of the girls on the piazza, "and he and Mr. Fearnot had an awful fight out there in the yard."

"Hello! Is that so?" exclaimed Terry, looking at Fred.

"Oh, we had a little dance around the well there," laughed Fred. But the girls told all about the fight, which caused the boys to throw up their caps and yell with joy.

"Now, boys, we must go back to the academy," said Fred, "for it's a four-mile tramp. It's the first time I ever attended the cutting down of a bee tree, and I don't think I'll ever forget the experience," and he told them about the sow and her two pigs, who chased him and the girls when the bees struck them.

"I never laughed so much in my life," said one of the girls, "and we wouldn't have had a bit of fun, if you boys hadn't come out. If we find another bee tree we'll send word to you, so you can be on hand."

"Oh, don't wait to find a bee tree," laughed Terry; "we'd a heap rather meet a lot of you girls than to have all the honey in the world."

The girls laughed and blushed, and one of them remarked that bees seemed to be necessary to stir up the crowd.

"Well, leave out the bees next time," laughed Fred. "Suppose you let us know when watermelons are ripe out here, and get about fifty of the biggest melons, tell us where to come and we'll be there. Over at the academy we have a branch of study from which we have learned how to eat watermelons and make love at the same time."

"All right," laughed the girls, "we'll have a big watermelon time some day, and let you know when it comes off," and with that the boys shook hands with them, thanked the Widow Green for her kindness, and started back for the academy in high spirits.

That night Fred called on the professor's daughter, in the Lambert cottage, and nearly killed her and her mother by his description of the funny things that happened when the bees got after them. The professor himself came in, and laughed till the tears ran down his face. It was the first time Fred had ever seen him unbend to such an extent.

Three of the boys had swollen faces the next day and had to stand any amount of jibing and guying in consequence. Others were a bit sick from having eaten so much honey.

About a week after their visit to the bee tree, Professor Lambert received a notice from a lawyer over in Avon, that a complaint had been lodged against a number of his students, by Farmer Adams, who claimed that they had set upon him and beaten him unmercifully, without provocation. The professor called the senior class into a room and read the letter to them. The boys were astonished and told the professor the true story of what had happened.

"I see, I see," said Professor Lambert, nodding his head, "you served him just right, but at the same time you trespassed upon his property, which had been posted with notices forbidding trespassing. But as the field was

not under cultivation, I hardly think he can make a case against you. I will have Mr. Brown go over and see the lawyer, and tell him just what you have told me. I am very sorry, however, that any complaint should be made against the pupils of the academy, for I want to keep the good will of every one, far and near. I hope hereafter, that in your tramps about the country, you will studiously avoid trespassing upon any property where you find notices forbidding trespassing posted up. I've never had a senior class in my school of whom I was more proud than of the present one, and I earnestly hope that you will give me no reason to feel otherwise." With that he dismissed the boys, and the next day, as Teacher Brown was about to go over to Avon to see the lawyer, Fred asked permission to accompany him.

"Yes, come along," said Brown. "Glad to have you go."

So they went over together and called on the lawyer.

Very much to their surprise they found Farmer Adams there.

"There's one of the young rascals!" exclaimed the farmer, as Fred entered the room. "He's the ringleader of the young villains."

Fred was indignant at being called a rascal and a ringleader of young villains, so he walked up to the farmer and said:

"See here, Mr. Adams, if you don't take that back I'll thrash you right here. I'm no more of a rascal than you are."

"Come, come!" interposed the lawyer, "I can't have any disturbance here in my office."

"Well, you'll have the worst kind of one," replied Fred, "if he doesn't take back calling me a rascal. He began it. We came over here to see you, in answer to your letter, and that's the first words we hear when we come in. I whaled him once, and I can do it again; and if you interfere I'll bring the whole academy over here and whale you;" and with that he stepped back, locked the door of the office, and put the key in his pocket.

Teacher Brown was so utterly dumfounded, that he stood there without uttering a word, whilst the lawyer started to raise a window to call for the police.

"No use to call for the police, sir," said Fred. "I can whale some sense into this old fool before they can get in here," and with that he started towards Adams, who said:

"Hold on! Hold on, now! I'll take it back! I didn't come here for a fight!"

"That's all right," said Fred. "You called my schoolmates young villains. Do you take that back, too?"

"Yes."

"All right, keep a civil tongue in your head," and with that Fred replaced the key in the lock of the door and proceeded to tell the lawyer his side of the story of what had occurred on the day of the bee hunt. He told it straight and frequently referred to Adams to confirm his statement.

"Well," said the lawyer, looking at his client, "it seems that you struck the first blow and got the worst of it. You have no case against the boys, unless it be for trespassing on your property."

"That's it," said Adams, "it was posted, and they had

no right to come on my land. I ordered them off and they wouldn't go."

"All right," put in Fred, "prosecute us for trespassing and I'll go out and make a case against you for assault with intent to kill, for over in the Widow Green's yard you assaulted me with a hoe handle, swearing you would kill me, and the widow and two young ladies stood on the piazza and saw me defend myself against your attack. The fact that I thrashed you does not relieve you from the charge of an intention to kill me."

"See here, Adams," said the lawyer, "if you don't drop this thing you'll wind up in State prison, for you were not on your property when you attacked him."

"Well, drop it, then!" growled Adams.

"Oh, that won't do you any good," laughed Fred, "for since you have followed it up, I intend to give you a taste of the law. I told you at the Widow Green's place that you were the meanest man that I had ever run up against, and all this is a proof of it."

The lawyer and Teacher Brown, however, finally persuaded Fred to let the matter drop, and Farmer Adams went away feeling that he had made another narrow escape.

On the way back to the academy Teacher Brown indulged in a very hearty laugh on the way Fred had turned the tables on the hot-headed, malicious farmer.

"I guess it won't do to tell the professor about it," he added, "but just simply state that the matter has been settled amicably."

"All right," laughed Fred, "I believe Shakespeare said, 'all's well that ends well,' but I couldn't stand his calling me a rascal, for we boys did nothing in the world to justify such an epithet being applied to us. We may get into mischief occasionally, but not one of the boys in the class would do anything maliciously."

"I don't think you would, either," assented Brown.

When Fred and the assistant teacher returned to the academy, he found the boys in a fever of excitement over a challenge for a boat race, which had just been received from the Avon Boat Club. Not one of them asked him a question about his interview with the lawyer, for that incident was no longer thought of. Terry, who held the challenge in his hand, waved it above his head, as Fred and the teacher entered the gate, calling out at the top of his voice:

"A challenge, a challenge, Fred!"

"A challenge to what?" Fred sang out.

"To a boat race with the Avon Club," answered Terry.

"Great Scott, is that so?"

"Yes;" and as Fred rushed up to Terry, he seized the letter and read it.

He was the captain of the Academy Boat Club, and was highly elated over the promise of the excitement it contained. The race was to come off ten days from the date of the letter, and was to pass over a mile course in the river, beginning at the bend a quarter of a mile below the boat clubhouse.

"All right, boys," he said, "we'll begin this afternoon to practice and keep it up every day. Those Avon fellows handle the oars splendidly, and if we beat them it'll be a long feather in our cap."

"Oh, we've got to beat 'em," chuckled Terry.

"Of course we have. That's what we are going to train for."

The news of the challenge sent a thrill of excitement through the entire school. The youngest boy at the academy felt as much interested as the immediate members of the boat-club, and that day all the teachers, from the principal down, were very much annoyed over the lack of interest in their lessons among the boys. The principal had to call attention to the fact that they had not come there to win boat races, but to fit themselves for the great battle of life that was before them; so he suggested that in school they think of their studies and center their minds upon them instead of the boat race.

"Naturally, I should be very much gratified if you win the race, boys, yet I would rather see you lose it than have you be remiss in your studies."

The boys understood what he meant and applied themselves to their studies with a great deal of perseverance, for fear that if they failed in their lessons, to an unusual degree, he would forbid the boat race altogether. That afternoon, when the boat-club started out for their first pull up the river, all the freshmen and juniors were on the river banks to cheer them, and from that hour there was not a single break in the backing that the boys gave the class. They were the champions of the academy, and the younger boys looked up to them as though they regarded them as heroes.

They pulled up the river a couple of miles, exchanged greetings with the Andrews family and then turned down stream again.

Fred watched every oar, letting nothing escape him and called attention of each one, where he thought it was necessary, to any defect that was to be remedied.

"They are going to be hard to beat, boys," said he, "and we've got to do our level best every time we train, as well as on the day of the race."

"Oh, we'll win," said the boys.

"All right," he returned, "it's well enough to feel confident, but it's better still for each one to do his level best."

When the news was published in the Avon daily paper that a great boat-race was to take place between the academy boys and the Avon Club, the whole town seemed to be electrified.

"It will draw ten thousand visitors to the city," said the paper, "and we suggest that the business men make it a holiday, so that every man, woman and child can see the race."

The next day after the announcement Fred received a note signed by the senior class of the Girls' High School, stating that they were going to wear the colors of the Academy Boys' Boat-Club. On reading the letter to the boys they gave the girls three cheers and a tiger, and authorized Fred to extend the thanks of the boat-club to them.

In their next trip up the river the boys trained harder than ever. When they reached the Andrews farm, which was the limit of their training exercise, they found the whole Andrews family standing on the river bank, each one wearing the colors of the club.

"Got it, boys," yelled the old farmer, "we are backing you for all we are worth."

"Say, boys," said Fred, "let's go ashore, shake hands with him, and let him know that we appreciate that."

So they shot in shore, landed and shook hands with the entire family, from the old man down to the youngest child. Mollie was blushing beautiful, and the boys cheered her on account of the skillful combination she had made of the colors of the club, which she wore upon her left breast. Fred praised it so highly that she unpinned it and gave it to him.

CHAPTER VIII.

"THEY ARE MY BOYS, AND I WANTED THEM TO WIN!"

As Fred was clad only in trousers and a sweater, the farmer's daughter had to pin the colors on the top of his cap, where they waved like a plume, as they rowed swiftly downstream to the boat-house. When he put on his coat and vest, he pinned the colors to the lapel of his coat and wore it up to the academy. They met Eunice Lambert in the grove before they could reach the dormitory, and from one of the boys she learned of the presentation of the colors. For a moment she turned pale, but in another she regained complete control of her feelings, and examined the combination of the colors which had been very skillfully arranged.

"They are very pretty," she remarked to Fred, "but I think I can make an improvement on the arrangement, and if I do will you wear them on the day of the race?"

"Of course I will," he replied, "and wear them proudly."

"I hope you'll win the race," said she.

"Thank you. We are going to do our best to win it, and if we don't we'll be a very much disappointed crowd of boys."

"Oh, if you are beaten I'll just cry my eyes out," she remarked.

"Oh, it won't be any use to cry," he laughed, "for that never does any good."

"I couldn't help it," she returned, "for I would be too much disappointed, and disappointment is something that is hard for me to bear."

The next day, when the boys started down to the boat-house to practice and train, Eunice stopped Fred and shewed him the combination of colors she had prepared.

They were a decided improvement on the one gotten up by Mollie Andrews.

"Let me pin it on your cap," she said.

"Oh, no, if I wear it while training it will be ruined before the day of the race. You see I've left the one Mollie gave me up in my room. I'll save this until the day of the race, and then I want you to fasten it on so it will stay and let me kiss your hand, as the old Knight Errants did their lady loves before they went out to battle."

"Oh, my," she gasped, "how romantic you are."

"Oh, it makes me feel romantic just to look at you," he said.

"Oh, go along with you and train to win the race," and she pushed him away in the direction of the other boys who had passed on.

He left her with a heart that was fluttering like a bird in a cage, for she was now madly in love with him, while

he was quite unconscious of the state of her feelings towards him.

Thus the training went on every day by the boys of the Academy Boat Club, whilst farther down the river the Avon Boat Club was also training with equal energy. Everything pointed to a tremendous crowd in Avon on the day of the race, and sporting men came from the larger cities to risk money upon the result of it. The three hotels in the town had every room engaged several days ahead, whilst every boarding house received applications for accommodations. All the shops and business houses agreed to close up and give their employees a holiday. Stands were erected at various places along the banks of the river, while seats were sold at a premium. Several steamboats were chartered to bring up crowds from the towns and cities below.

"I tell you, boys," said Fred, "it's the biggest thing that ever happened in Avon, and if we don't win I'll be a sick boy."

"So will I," said Terry, "but we must make the other fellows sick."

"Yes," laughed Dick Duncan, "they are the ones we want to make sick."

On the day before the race, Fred went over to Avon accompanied by Terry, to see the captain of the rival club about certain preliminary arrangements. They were received cordially and treated royally.

"I suppose you fellows think you are going to beat us," remarked the captain of the Avon Club.

"Of course," laughed Fred; "you don't suppose that we think that you're going to beat us, do you?"

"Well, hardly, but all the same we will beat you."

"Well, if you do, you'll have something to be proud of, for it'll be mighty fine work that wins, if you beat us."

"Yes; we know that. We've been training to win."

"So have we," returned Fred.

When the boys left, they passed up Main street, meeting hundreds of people wearing their colors.

"By George, Fred," said Terry, "the crowd's with us. I'll bet there's a lot of babies in the town wearing our colors."

"I don't doubt it," laughed Fred, "and if we lose the race I shall be ashamed to look the little things in the face."

On the morning of the great day of the race people came pouring into Avon from every point of the compass. Thousands drove in from the country and from towns and villages twenty and thirty miles away, whilst extra trains arrived every half hour. Steamboats came puffing up the river, loaded with masses of humanity. Long before the start was to be made the banks of the river were taken possession of by the people with lunch baskets, who settled down to wait in order to make sure of a good place from which to see the boats as they passed. Along the river banks, at places where crowds could not use the shore, steamboats anchored, in order to give their passengers a good view of the race.

When the Academy Boat Club went down to their boat-house to enter their boat, Eunice Lambert was there with a rosette made of the colors of the club for each member. Fred went up to her and she pinned one of them on his

left breast, after which he dropped on one knee and pressed her hands to his lips. She blushed furiously, but the homage he paid her lost its significance when the others followed his example: she laughed and told each one to do his best to win, and each promised her that he would. Then they entered the boat to row down to the starting point, whilst she returned to the academy to accompany her mother and father to a grand stand that had been erected on the banks of the river, where seats were reserved for the faculty of the school. The senior class of the Girls' High School was there, and a more enthusiastic crowd of girls could not have been found in the whole town that day, for the year before, Fred, at the risk of his own life, had saved the lives of four of those girls.

The grand stand was just a few hundred yards above the spot where the race was to end. The occupants of it could see the judges as they took up their position to decide the contest. About a hundred yards above it was anchored a large steamboat, which was crowded with hundreds of men, women and children. The racing boats would pass within fifty feet of it; hence every one on board was sure of getting a good view. By and by a great wave of cheering was heard far up the river, telling those below that the race was begun. Thousands of spectators craned their necks, gazing upstream to get sight of the trim little boats as they skimmed through the water.

"Here they come! Here they come!" cried hundreds, as they caught sight of them, and the great crowds on either bank roared and cheered as the two boat clubs passed them. They were coming neck and neck, as the saying goes on the race course. The oars splashed in the bright sunlight, and the long, narrow, sharp-prowed boats cut the water like knife blades. How the boys pulled! They bent to their oars like sailors, pulling for dear life. Try hard as they would, neither crew seemed to be able to get an inch ahead of the other, and for a distance of nearly two-thirds of the way they were abreast of each other.

"Now, boys," called out Fred in a low tone of voice to his crew, "just a few pounds more of muscle and we'll pass them. That's it. Just a little more. Keep steady, now. Pull hard. Don't look to the right or left. We are a few feet ahead of them now. Pull as never before in your lives. Look out there, Tom. Pull steady. Don't dip your oars too deep. Keep cool, every one of you."

Thus encouraged, the boys reached forward until their faces almost touched their knees, as they made their long, sweeping strokes. Soon they were half a boat's length ahead of the Avon Club, and those wearing the colors of the academy boys, on either bank, became frantic in their wild cheering. They threw up their hats, screamed and yelled like lunatics. The High School girls on the grand stand sprang to their feet, screaming out:

"Oh, the boys are forging ahead! They will win, they will win!"

Eunice Lambert sprang up from beside her mother, and faintly screamed with joy. Just as the academy boys arrived opposite the steamboat, which was anchored about a hundred yards above the grand stand, a splash was seen in the water near the side of the steamboat. A little three-year-old child, a girl, had fallen from the upper deck, having been pushed off by the eager, yelling crowd, as she

stood by the side of her mother. The mother's screams could not be heard above the roar and din of the yelling multitude. Suddenly Fred was seen to rise to his feet and spring into the water, disappearing entirely from sight. A cry of horror went up from thousands, who could not understand why he did so, but the next minute he reappeared nearly twenty feet from where he struck the water and was seen swimming boldly towards the steamer.

His companions in the boat, apparently not noticing his action, kept pulling on their oars for all they were worth. The attention of everybody on either side of the river was centered on Fred, for they were lost in wonder and amazement at his action. But when they saw him, scarcely a minute later, raise a child out of the water above his head, they understood it, and a roar of applause went up that seemed to shake the very trees on the river bank. When the boat shot under the line, the Avons were winners by about three feet, but Fred himself was a winner in the hearts of the vast multitude, that was worth a thousand times more than was the victory the club had lost.

He swam down the stream with the child, to the foot of the grand stand, where the little child was lifted out of the water by a stalwart man who reached down for it. A moment later another man extended his hand and pulled her up after the child. Women and girls crowded around him, hugged and kissed him, in their frantic admiration of his exploit.

"Did we win or lose?" he asked of a man near by, while a woman's arm was around his neck.

"Hanged if I know," replied the man, "but you have won, and that is enough."

"Well, I couldn't see the child drown," said Fred. "I hope the little thing is not hurt."

"Not a bit," said some one.

"Well, it's all right, then, but we were more than half a boat's length ahead when I left the boat."

So many women were crowding around him that Fred was utterly unable to make his way out. The ladies didn't seem to mind damaging their fine toilets by coming in contact with his dripping clothes. They kept seizing his hand, and even those behind him would clasp him around the neck, pull him back and kiss him. Suddenly he found himself face to face with the High School girls. They, too, had to kiss him. Then, to his astonishment, Mrs. Lambert caught him around the neck.

"Oh, you dear, brave boy!" she cried. "I believe you've lost the race, yet I thank Heaven for it, for a child's life is worth all the races in the world."

"I'm sorry we lost the race," he replied, "but I was in the water before I knew it, for I caught a full view of the frightened face of the little thing before it struck the water."

As he said that, he saw standing behind Mrs. Lambert, her daughter, Eunice, with her big, blue eyes gazing wistfully at him. He reached out his hand to her, saying:

"We've lost the race."

Without a word she stepped forward and threw her arms around his neck, saying:

"It's the greatest victory you ever won in your life!"

He kissed her, and it was the first time his lips ever pressed her cheek.

"I couldn't help it," said he.

"Of course you couldn't," she returned. "It would not have been like you to have done otherwise."

Soon the news came to the grand stand that the judges had decided in favor of the Avon Club, with the statement that but for the accident the academy boys would have won.

"I am satisfied with that," said Fred, "for after all it is but an empty honor for the other fellows."

The rescue of the child, under the circumstances, sent a thrill through the multitude, that added to the interest of the race a thousand fold, for thousands had seen with their own eyes that when Fred left the academy crew, they were more than half a boat's length ahead of the Avons, and they had only a couple of hundred yards more to pull.

A great stream of people poured across the bridge to get a glimpse of the child and the brave youth who had saved his life. She had been restored to her mother, on board the steamer, who clasped her to her heart, screaming with joy.

It took Fred nearly a half hour to get through the crowd to the carriage of Professor Lambert, who insisted that he should ride back to the academy with him. He sat alongside of Eunice all the way back, and frequently regretted that the boys had lost the race, at the same time expressing gratification that he had saved the life of the child.

"Why, my boy," said the professor, "the most ardent parti-an of the Avon Club will admit that the race was lost to them had you remained in the boat. It is really a double victory and a most glorious one, and to-morrow I intend to give all the students a holiday to celebrate it. I don't believe that any one on either bank of the river cheered louder than I did."

"Yes," laughed Mrs. Lambert, "and no one was more astonished than I when I heard you."

"Oh, I couldn't help it," he laughed. "They were my boys and I wanted them to win."

CHAPTER IX.

A THOUSAND DOLLARS.

When the boys returned to their clubhouse, they found Fred there waiting for them. He had changed his wet clothes for dry ones and was feeling in much better humor than were the boys in the boat. The first greeting he received from the crew came from Terry, who sang out, while the boat was yet a hundred feet away from the little dock:

"You made us lose the race, Fred."

"Yes," chimed in Dick Duncan, "we had them beaten when you left us."

"Well, everybody knows that," he replied. "So the victory isn't worth anything to the Avons."

"Oh, yes, it is," replied Dick, "for they'll get the name throughout the whole country of having beaten us."

"Don't you believe that," returned Fred. "I would rather have saved the life of that child than have won a thousand races."

"Oh, that's all right," returned Dick. "Somebody else could have saved it just as well, and we would have won the race."

"Well, it seems that nobody else tried to save it," said Fred, "and the probabilities are that if I hadn't jumped when I did, the child would have been drowned, as I don't believe a man on that boat knew that the child was in the water. The women had been placed on the front row with the men behind them, and they were making such a tremendous noise, that no one could hear the screams of the mother when the child fell."

"That's so," assented Joe Jencks, as he stepped out of the boat. "Still, for all that, I'm sorry we lost the race."

"So am I," replied Fred, "but Professor Lambert says that I did right and that not a single man in the vast crowd would deny the fact that we had the Avons beaten. He was so well pleased with the whole thing he told me he intended to give us all a holiday to-morrow."

"Good for the professor!" cried the boys.

"Oh, he's all right," laughed Fred. "I heard him say that he doubted that any man on either bank of the river yelled louder than he did."

"Great Scott, boys!" exclaimed Terry, "just think of that, will you? Let's give him three cheers." And the boys responded at the top of their lungs.

Before the boys could put on their other clothes a crowd of the academy students reached the boat-house, all greatly disappointed over the outcome of the race, but when they heard that they were to be given a holiday they were quite satisfied to let it go at that. They marched from the boat-house up to the academy grounds in a body, cheering and singing as though the decision had been in their favor.

When they reached the academy the professor was standing on the stoop, and to his surprise the boys cheered him with a tremendous whoop. He made a neat little speech, in which he claimed that the academy crew had really won the race, and that he intended to proclaim a holiday, to let the boys celebrate it to their hearts' content. Then he astonished them by suggesting that they immediately challenge the Avons for another race. The boys fairly howled with joy, and Fred sang out as soon as he could be heard:

"Say, boys! the dear old professor is game and chock full of sporting blood. Let's give him three times three and a tiger," and the boys yelled and cheered, till the professor blushed like a schoolgirl.

He simply bowed his thanks to the boys and went indoors.

"Now, boys," sang out Fred again, "we'll challenge them for another race this day week, and in the challenge I intend to state that we had them beaten, but that the impulse to save human life has thrown the decision to them."

"Good, good!" cried Terry, and the boys cheered their approval of his words.

That night, Fred, as captain of the academy crew, wrote a letter to the captain of the Avons, challenging them to another race one week from date, and the next day it was delivered by messenger. The Avons promptly accepted the challenge, but denied that they were beaten, claiming that they were catching up with the academy boys' lead when Fred sprang out of his boat. They congratulated him, however, on his rescue of the child, and honored him as the hero of the day.

When the school opened the next morning the professor called them to order and said:

"Boys, close your books. You are free for the day to celebrate the victory of yesterday, in your own way. Enjoy yourselves to your hearts' content."

The boys gave a whoop that almost raised the roof and poured out of the academy to indulge in all the sports that were permitted on the grounds.

During the day a messenger arrived at the academy, bearing a huge bouquet of flowers from the High School girls, with a note from them, in which they begged permission to pay tribute to the valor of the Academy Boat Crew.

"Say, boys," cried Terry, "those girls are all right, eh?"

"You bet they are," the boys responded, and at once authorized Fred to thank them in the name of the club for the flowers and their kind expressions, and to invite them to witness the next race, which was to come off the following week.

It was learned, through the columns of the Avon morning paper, that the little child whose life had been saved by Fred was the daughter of a prominent citizen, living in a town some forty miles down the river. The paper stated that the father had sought everywhere in the crowd to find the brave rescuer of his child to thank him, but that the boat left too soon to give him an opportunity to do so. About noon that day Fred received a telegraphic dispatch from him, expressing his thanks and admiration of his brave deed, and authorized him to draw on him, at sight, for one thousand dollars for the benefit of the boat club.

"Great Scott, boys!" exclaimed Fred, when he read the dispatch. "just look at this," and he handed it to Terry to read to them.

They cheered lustily when they heard the contents of the telegram, and at once began to speculate on what they should do with the money.

"Now, hold on, boys!" cried Fred. "We don't need a cent of that money."

"Oh, yes, we do!" sang out Dick Duncan. "We need new boats and repairs on the club-house. You haven't got a thing to do with it, Fred, for it is a gift to the club and not to you."

"That's so," chimed in the other members of the crew, and Fred saw that they were all in favor of accepting the gift.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," he said. "We'll submit it to the professor and be guided by his advice in the matter."

The boys agreed to that, and went in a body to the professor's cottage, gave him the dispatch, and asked for his advice in the matter.

"It's a generous gift, boys," said the professor, "and it seems that he is a man of means. I would suggest that you write to him and thank him for his offer, instead of drawing on him for the money. Then let him send his check," and the boys went away satisfied.

Fred, however, remained to speak a few words with Eunice, as that was the first time he had seen her that morning. She was extremely shy on account of having kissed him the day before on the grand stand.

"It was a big crowd, wasn't it?" he said to her.

"Yes," she replied, "the largest crowd I ever saw, and I think everybody got his money's worth."

"Oh, I'm not sure of that," he laughed, "for I fear that many of our friends had backed us and lost money when we failed to get the decision."

"Oh, I didn't mean that," said she. "When two people bet, one is bound to lose, but the excitement of the race and the rescue of the dear little child satisfied everybody who saw it. I saw hundreds of women who actually cried from joy and nervous excitement when the little child was lifted out of the water unharmed."

"Oh, that was natural. Women are all tender-hearted," said Fred. "I never got so many kisses before in all my life, and I can taste some of them yet. One in particular," and he looked at her in a way that caused her to blush and look confused.

"Oh, the girls couldn't help it," she finally said, by way of excuse.

"Well, we are going to have another race and wear the same colors you prepared for us yesterday, and we want you to be our mascot."

"Oh, dear, do the boys want that?"

"Well, I haven't said anything to them about it. I was simply speaking for myself," and that pleased her more than if every boy in school had made the request.

"Well, I will serve if you wish me to, but really I don't know what I would have to do."

"Oh, we'd simply place you in the center of the grand stand, with the boat flag waving above your head, and as the boat passes you rise to your feet and wave the colors toward us."

"Oh, I would be so glad to do that if it would encourage the boys."

"It would encourage them. It would put new heart into them, for we think more of our dear little counselor than of anybody else in the world."

Late that afternoon the crew took a spin up the river, training for the next race, and when they reached the Andrews farm they stopped and went ashore to get a drink of water from the old farmer's well. The farmer was at work in his field, but he left his plow, joined the boys, and a few minutes later his wife and daughter came out. The daughter looked at Fred reproachfully.

"You lost that race yesterday," said she, "because you didn't wear the colors I made for you."

Fred saw at a glance that she had noticed the change, and said in explanation:

"I wore your colors every time we trained, but on the day of the race a rosette that had been prepared for the crew was worn by each one."

"Who made them?" she asked.

"Miss Lambert, the professor's daughter."

"Yes, I thought so," she returned. "I knew she wouldn't let you wear mine."

"You are mistaken. Each one of us had to wear the same kind, and as you had made only one, there was nothing else for me to do but to wear the same that the others did. I have yours yet."

"But you haven't got it on now," she observed.

"No; I'm taking care of it. I'm going to wear it in the

next race," and that promise seemed to satisfy her completely.

After a half hour's stay at the farm the boys returned to the river and rowed back to the club-house, whilst the rustic beauty stood on the river bank, waving her handkerchief as long as they were in sight.

"Say, Fred," remarked Terry, "Mollie seems to be getting sweet on you."

"Oh, no," he laughed, "but I am getting sweet on her, and you fellows that are fond of good watermelons had better follow my example. They'll soon be ripe, you know, and all we'll have to do to get our fill of them will be to enter the boat and train all the way up there."

"Good, good!" laughed the crew, "we'll keep on training as long as the melon season lasts."

The boys trained every day, although they knew that no crowd was expected to witness the second race. All they wanted was to get a decision that would sustain the claim they had made that they'd won the first race. It soon became evident, however, that the local population would turn out en masse to witness it; that all the schools would be closed, and the shops and business houses would shut up to allow their employes to witness it.

On the day before the race was to take place Fred and Terry went over to the post office, where they were promptly surrounded by a crowd, who had many questions to ask about the coming event.

"Oh, we're going to win," said Fred. "We've got the best crew, and intend to prove it."

A very strong partisan of the Avon Club offered to bet Fred a hundred dollars that the Avons would win.

"I'm not a betting man," replied Fred. "I never gambled to the extent of a penny in my life."

"Oh, I guess you'd bet 'if you were confident of winning," replied the other.

"No," asserted Fred. "I am confident of winning, but if you're very anxious to lose your money, I guess you can find some of our friends who will take your bet."

"I'm not anxious to lose," replied the other; "I'm anxious to win."

"I'll take your bet," said a man in the crowd, pushing his way up to the side of Fred. "You can't bluff those boys when I'm around."

"I'm not trying to bluff," returned the other. "I am simply trying to find out whether the academy boys really have any faith in their ability to win; but I see they haven't."

"Well, now," said Fred, "since you talk that way, come with me to the Avon Bank, and I'll put up one thousand dollars against a like amount, that we'll win to-morrow's race. So put up or shut up."

"That's more money than I've got," said the other.

"Well, put up half of it," suggested Fred.

"All right, I'll do it, and I guess I can find somebody else to put up the other half."

"All right; how much time do you want to find them?"

"Oh, I guess a half hour will do."

"All right," replied Fred. "I'll wait for you at the bank."

In less than half an hour the man returned to the bank, accompanied by three others, and the bet was made. It

created a good deal of excitement in the town, and that evening when the academy boys heard of it, they looked upon Fred as the champion of the whole school.

CHAPTER X.

TWO BETS AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM.

When Professor Lambert heard that Fred had wagered a thousand dollars on the race, he was both surprised and annoyed, as it was something that he did not like to encourage. He sent for Fred and asked him why he had done so.

"Solely for the moral effect of it," Fred replied. "Many of our friends have lost money on the first race, and that man was bluffing me publicly on the street, and I saw what his object was. He was bluffing me with an offer of one hundred dollars' wager, so I called him down with a thousand."

"But, surely, your father will not approve of such a thing," remarked the professor.

"Oh, it's my own money, sir," said Fred, "and father knows that I'm not given to gambling. So don't let that worry you. We are going to win the race and have you donate the thousand dollars to any charity, or poor people, whom you think most deserving."

"Oh, well, that puts a different face on it, my boy," said the professor, very much gratified; but I shall be very much grieved if you lose it."

"So will I," laughed Fred, "but we are not going to lose it, for I know what our crew can do; and as sure as the race comes off, the Avon crew will be beaten. If you have no objection, I would like to apply the thousand dollars towards paying the expenses of some poor boy for a full course at the academy here."

"That's it, that's it," said the professor, his face beaming with enthusiasm; "give some ambitious poor boy an education. It's better than distributing it to people who will consume it in a few weeks or months, for a good education will last a man his lifetime. Don't say anything about it, though, until after the race, and then I want you, if you win, to get up on the grand stand and make a public statement of the uses to which the money is to be put."

"All right, sir. I'll do it."

The next day, very much to the surprise of everybody in Avon, more than two thousand people came into the little town to see the race. In the forenoon Fred and Terry again had occasion to go over into the town and were again surrounded by betting men, who were backing up the Avons. They bantered the two boys right and left, until Terry, losing patience, challenged them to put up a thousand dollars and he'd cover it.

"All right," yelled a man in the crowd, who proved to be a sport from Elmira, "I'll cover that bet," and they forthwith repaired to the bank, where the cashier agreed to hold the stakes. Then the boys got away and returned to the academy.

"I'm glad you did that, Terry," said Fred.

"Oh, plague him," replied Terry, "I just couldn't stand it. They were trying to take some of the life out of us by their bluffing."

They said nothing about the new bet that had been

made, and at the appointed time the academy crew entered their boat and repaired to the starting point. While there were thousands of people along the river bank and the grand stand was jammed, there were no steamboats from which any more children could fall overboard.

The two crews started at the signal and the cheering began all along down the river, as they progressed along the course.

As in the previous race, both boats kept about even, till they were within a couple of hundred yards of the judge's stand. Then Fred leaned forward, and in a low tone called to his crew:

"Now for it, boys! Longer strokes and quicker ones! A few more pounds of power and we've got them! Steady now! Strain every muscle!"

The boys laid to their oars until the muscles in their bare arms stood out like whiplashes. The keen prow of their boat cut through the water like a sharp knife. The great crowd on the grand stand stood up and cheered, whilst Eunice Lambert, surrounded by the senior class of the High School girls, sprang to her feet and waved the colors of the academy boys high above her head. In her excitement she sprang up on her seat, so that she was head and shoulders above every one else. As the boat flew swiftly by, Fred turned and looked at her. Then he looked at the other boat, and found that he was half a length ahead. He waved his hand at Eunice, and the next moment the boat had cut its way past the grand stand. They shot over the line nearly two-thirds of a boat's length ahead of the Avons and had won!

How the crowd yelled and roared. The Avons and their backers were thunderstruck. Scores and scores of men had lost money in backing them.

"Hurry to the grand stand, now, boys," said Fred, and the long, slender boat whirled around and made its way to the grand stand, where they were received with cheers and waving of handkerchiefs, parasols and fans.

Both Fred and Terry climbed out and made their way to where Eunice and the High School girls were seated. There the young captain of the crew sprang up on a bench and waved his hand for silence.

"Ladies, gentlemen and friends," he called out; "for the first time in my life I bet money on this race. I won a thousand dollars, and now I want to say that the money will be placed in the bank of Avon to defray the expenses of a four years' course of a poor boy at the Avon Academy. A committee will be appointed to examine applicants, and the only condition attached to it is that the boy must be too poor to pay his own way."

The crowd roared and cheered over the generous offer for full ten minutes. When silence was restored Terry Olcott sprang up, and sang out:

"I won a thousand dollars, too, and I intend to make the same use of the money that our captain has made of his, but because the senior class of the Girls' High School has worn our colors at both races, and favored us their presence and votes, I will give the thousand dollars to them for the purpose of educating some poor girl in that institution."

That set the crowd wild. It came like a clap of thunder from a cloudless sky; the cheering lasted full ten minutes

again, during which time the High School girls surrounded Terry and hugged and kissed him as they did Fred the day before. It was the sensation of the day and nothing else was talked of, even after the crowd dispersed, but the generous action of the two boys of the academy crew.

Professor Lambert was on the grand stand, and knew what Fred was going to do, but had not heard a word about Terry's bet. Hence he was as much surprised as anybody else in the big crowd. Doubtless he was a bit disappointed that the Girls' School got Terry's thousand, but he was politic enough not to let the fact become known. He shook hands with each one of the High School girls present, and congratulated them, inviting them to pay another visit to the academy, on some occasion, and expressed the hope that he was then engaged in educating some boy who might perhaps be a life partner of some one in their class. The girls blushing accepted his congratulations and invitation, after which the crowd slowly dispersed, and the boys re-entered their boat to row back to the clubhouse.

It was a great day for the Avon Academy, for the boys had proven to the world that they were justified in claiming they were winners in the first race. They had a general rejoicing at the clubhouse in the evening, where they sang and danced to a late hour, for the professor kindly suspended the rule in regard to early retiring, and further than that, he gave them the rest of the week, two days, as a holiday, in which to celebrate the victory and pull themselves together for the resumption of their studies.

Naturally the Avon Boat Club fellows were very sore over their defeat, and talked about issuing another challenge, but Professor Lambert sent word to them that he would not allow his students to engage in another race until the end of the term, as the excitement interfered, to a marked degree, with their studies.

The second day after the last race the faculty of the Girls' High School sent a letter of thanks to Terry Olcott for his generous donation of a scholarship to that institution by the hands of the entire senior class, who went over in five carriages. The girls remained a couple of hours on invitation of the professor, and the boys had a jolly time with them. It seemed that the girls had already selected the beneficiary of Terry's scholarship fund, who was a poor but ambitious girl living in Avon, and she would enter upon her course at the beginning of the next term.

There was one of the girls in the class with whom Terry was smitten at first sight, and they spent an hour together in conversation, and agreed that after the expiration of the term in their respective schools they would correspond. She came from Kingston, while his home was at Fredonia.

That night, in their room, he admitted to Fred that he guessed he was stuck on a girl for the first time in his life.

"Just what I thought," laughed Fred, "and from what I saw, while you were with her, she is as much impressed as you are."

"By George, I hope so," ventured Terry, "for she is certainly the most beautiful girl I ever met, and, what's more, she is bright."

"How in thunder came you to give that money to the Girls' High School?" Fred asked.

"Well, the thought came to me to do so just as soon as I

heard you put up yours for a scholarship at the academy. The girls had backed us up so loyally that I couldn't resist the temptation to do what I did."

"Well, it was a big hit," asserted Fred, "and will have a far better effect on the whole town than if both had been given to the academy."

"Of course it will, and hereafter the two institutions will be greater friends than ever."

"Oh, you can always trust boys and girls to be friends to each other," laughed Fred.

"Yes, I know, but the faculty of the two institutions have been just a bit jealous of each other, and just why it should be so is a mystery to me."

"Oh, that feeling exists in all institutions," remarked Fred. "There are five Christian churches over in Avon, and the pastor of each is jealous of all the others, notwithstanding they preach charity and love for all mankind every Sunday."

"Yes, I guess that's so," assented Terry, "but all the same it shouldn't be."

"Right you are. I once heard a very cynical old fellow, down in New York, remark in father's office that very few things were just as they should be in this world, and I guess he was not very far from right."

The two boat races gave Avon Academy a vast amount of advertising throughout the country. Thousands of people who had never heard of the institution before, naturally asked where it was situated, the size of the town, and how to reach it. Hundreds of letters of inquiry came to Professor Lambert, from heads of families with sons to educate, asking for information about tuition, board, health of the locality and moral surroundings. The professor himself was not only surprised, but highly gratified, so he had circulars printed answering all the questions, and setting forth the advantages of the academy and its position and surroundings, in a most attractive form.

Days and weeks passed, and the boys got down to hard study again, yet in their hours of recreation indulged in all sorts of athletic sports to their hearts' content.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MELON FEAST.

The reader will not forget that on the day the boys attended the cutting down of the great bee tree on Farmer Adams' land, four miles from the academy, two of the girls who witnessed Fred's fight with the farmer, in Widow Green's yard, promised him and the boys that when watermelons were ripe they would invite them out to a great melon feast. Naturally, the daughters of the farmers were extremely anxious to make the acquaintance of the students of the senior class, and their mothers backed them up in that desire.

The boys had forgotten all about the promise, hence they were very much surprised one day, when Fred received a note from one of the girls, inviting the class out to the Widow Green's farm, to a watermelon feast. The writer of the note asked him to kindly let her know how many boys were in the class, and how many would attend. He replied that there were seventeen, and that every one would attend, and notified her further that they would all

fast the day before, in order to be able to do full justice to the feast that she and her friends so kindly tendered.

"Say, boys," said he to several of them down at the boat house, "this is the best thing that we've struck yet."

"You bet it is," cried several.

"I don't believe," Fred continued, "that the Widow Green has any daughter at all, as I did not see any who we were there. I think the girls have persuaded her to let them have the feast at her house, and they and their mothers will be there with wagon loads of melons."

"Just the thing!" cried Terry. "Hope none of them will have their dads along to watch us."

"Well, now, see here, boys," added Fred, "the farmers for miles around this academy are down on the schoolboys because some of us have been disposed to borrow watermelons from their patches, and were negligent about returning them."

"Oh, they don't expect a watermelon to be returned," laughed Joe Jencks.

"No, but they have a right to expect thanks, if not pay, and you can bet that if the old man isn't along with the girls next Saturday, the old lady will be there, so we must every one, for the honor of the academy, be on our good behavior, so their mothers can go home declaring that we are all perfect gentlemen. If you don't all pledge yourselves to do that, I, for one, won't go."

"Good, good!" cried Terry clapping his hands, "that's just the thing for us to do, and I suggest that each one of us put on our best Sunday suit, and, all the way there and back, be on our best behavior, treating the girls and their mothers with all the deference that men can pay to ladies."

"That's it," exclaimed Fred. "Let's go in to astonish the whole crowd, and I'll wager that it will be the talk of the country for a month to come."

"You bet it will," put in Terry, "and it may bring us invitations from all the farms around. You see," he laughed, "no matter how hard-headed the old man may be, if he has a daughter the mother will be on the lookout for a nice young man for her."

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Tom Tipps, "what a lot of nice young men we'll be next Saturday!"

"Yes," said Fred, "and if any one behaves ungentlemanly he'll have me to lick on Saturday night or take a very handsome thrashing himself."

"All right, old man, we'll all help you out on that," sang out several of the boys.

All the arrangements having been completed to attend the watermelon banquet, the entire class started out on Saturday morning to walk four miles up the Rock Hill road to the Widow Green's farm. Each one had on his best suit of clothes and looked as neat and trim as he would in attending divine service. When they had tramped about a mile, some one of the boys suggested that they go into the woods and each cut a stout walking stick, which they could use in the tramp, going and coming, as well as to carry on their shoulders like guns, as they marched two abreast into the yard of the farm-house.

"That's a good idea, boys," said Fred, "let's do it!" so they went into the woods and spent nearly a half hour searching for such sticks as they desired, after which they

went on their way, laughing and chatting only as a lot of schoolboys would.

They met several farmers, who were driving to town, and exchanged greetings with them. One old farmer sang out:

"Boys, the gals have got some mighty fine melons for you. Look out that you don't eat too much."

"All right," laughed Fred, "we're just going to fill ourselves full up to our chins and then stop."

"Gosh, you'll have to stop if you fill up that much," chuckled the old man.

"Have they got enough to fill us up?" Terry asked.

"Gosh, yes; twice over."

The boys passed on, and in due time reached the farmhouse of the Widow Green. When they were within a hundred yards or so of the gate, they saw half a dozen teams hitched along the fence, and under the shade of two great, spreading oaks in the yard, a pile of large melons and a long table of rough plank.

"Boys," said Fred, "the girls are doing the thing just right, aren't they?"

"You bet they are!"

When they reached the gate they found half a dozen boys there, ranging from ten to thirteen years of age, probably the brothers of some of the girls, but not a man was in sight. On the piazza were gathered a knot of eighteen or twenty girls, who waved their handkerchiefs while the boys responded with a cheer. They marched into the yard, deposited their walking sticks on a corner of the piazza, took off their hats, and saluted the girls, after which they proceeded to shake hands all around.

Of course, the boys recognized quite a number of them, having met them at the bee tree circus. They exchanged greetings, inquired about the bee stings and the amount of honey they had secured that day, and so, in a very little while, they were all chatting as though they were old acquaintances. Each one of the boys paid his respects to the Widow Green, and thanked her for the great pleasure she afforded them in permitting the feast on her place.

"By George, Terry," Fred whispered to his chum, "I've counted the girls present, and hanged if there ain't just the same number that we are."

"Great Scott! Is that so?"

"Yes; and it means that each one of us has got to take a girl and stick to her; but how in thunder we're going to manage it to their satisfaction, is more than I know."

"Suppose we let them draw lots for us," suggested Terry.

"I guess they wouldn't do that."

"Oh, they are here for fun."

"That's all very true; but you can't get them to give themselves away by picking out a boy. I guess we'd better let the widow settle that matter herself, so if there's any dissatisfaction it won't fall on us."

"All right," laughed Terry, "go ahead and manage it."

Fred watched his opportunity, and when they were all out under the shade of the trees together, he called out:

"Say, boys, there are seventeen of us here and seventeen girls, with about one hundred splendid watermelons. While I am very fond of a delicious watermelon, I am more fond of a pretty girl."

"So are we," laughed all the boys, and the girls laughed and blushed.

"Now, for the sake of peace and harmony," Fred continued, "I suggest that Mrs. Green be appointed a committee of one to select a girl for each one of us, and whichever partner she gives us we are to stick to her as a brave man should to his lady."

"All right," sang out the boys, and the girls were in a flutter of excitement.

"Land sakes!" exclaimed the widow, "I'm afraid I'll make mistakes and the gals will hate me like pizen as long as they live," and there was great laughter at her speech from both the boys and girls.

"Oh, no danger of that," laughed Fred, "for the girls always have the privilege to exchange partners."

"Well, I'll do it," said the widow, and with that she took Fred by the arm and led him over to one of the rustic beauties, saying:

"There! you take her."

Fred extended his arm to the girl, and she took it and marched away with him, laughing gayly as she looked back over her shoulder at a number of other girls who were envying her.

It was great fun. Terry got hold of a bashful, good-looking girl, who was at least four inches taller than he, whilst Dick Duncan was assigned to a little black-eyed fat girl, whose head scarcely reached to his shoulders. But they all laughed merrily and paired off, walking around the yard, some up the road a distance, and others into the garden.

After an hour or so they all gathered at the table under the trees, where nearly half a hundred of luscious melons were cut.

The girl whom Fred had was blessed with a couple of big brothers, and she informed him that they were both very angry because the country boys had not been included in the invitation.

"There were about twenty of them," she added, "all very mad with us because they were left out; but we told them it was academy boys' day and didn't want any other boys along."

"Good for you," laughed Fred. "We like the country boys, but the trouble is they don't like us."

"No," laughed the girl, "and after this they will like you academy boys a great deal less, for some of them are awfully jealous."

"Well, I don't blame them for being jealous," remarked Fred, "for a prettier lot of girls I never saw together, in a bunch, in my life."

"Oh, you academy boys," she laughed, "are good at saying flattering things to the girls."

"Well, the girls are responsible for that," returned Fred, "for in all ages of the world woman's beauty has forced men to praise and flatter."

They spent nearly an hour eating melons, and screams of laughter followed joke and repartee. The girls were happy and the boys not less so. The Widow Green was watching all of them, as were a number of other matronly women on the porch, and all were charmed with the decorous behavior of the boys and the great respect they showed for the girls.

When the feast was over with, the couples again strolled about, finding seats under the shade trees, on the piazza

and other convenient places, where they sat and talked for an hour or two. Then they all got together again, and the Academy Glee Club sang upwards of a dozen songs for the girls.

Thus the hours flew by and the time came for the boys to return to the academy, but before they did so another lot of melons were cut and they proceeded to again fill themselves with the luscious fruit. That done, each one took leave of his girl and received from her a cordial invitation to call at her home. It is fair to say that some of the girls nearly lost their hearts to the boys, and some of the latter found the farmers' daughters extremely pleasant and lively companions.

Before leaving the boys paid their respects to the elderly ladies who were present, who likewise invited the boys to their homes, and then they shouldered their sticks, gave a cheer for the girls, and started off down the road towards Avon.

"Boys," said Fred, "I don't think I ever enjoyed a day better in my life."

"That's my fix, too," put in Terry, "although I had the longest girl in the crowd."

"Oh, she was long sweetening," exclaimed Joe Jencks, who had the shortest, plumpest girl of the lot.

"I suppose you'd call yours a lump of sugar, would you?" retorted Terry.

"No," he replied, "she was a lump of meat, but was the jolliest girl I ever met."

"Say, boys," cautioned Fred, "there's a lot of fellows down the road ahead of us, so be careful what you say about the girls."

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

On hearing Fred call their attention to the presence of parties ahead of them, the boys looked and saw sitting under the shade of the trees by the roadside a party of sixteen or twenty country boys, from eighteen to twenty-two or three, and some probably twenty-five years of age. As the boys approached, the countrymen rose to their feet.

"Say, Terry," whispered Fred, "they are the brothers and sweethearts of those girls, and as sure as you live they are waiting for us. Tell the boys to keep well together."

The word was passed along, and the boys tightened their grip on their sticks, thanking fortune that they were so well provided with the means of defense. When the academy boys came up abreast of the countrymen, the latter rose to their feet with a yell and rushed at them, each armed with a stout cudgel. They had not deigned to utter a word of explanation for the attack. They probably thought no explanation was necessary.

There were six of the academy boys who had taken lessons in sparring and fencing, and to that fact the entire crowd owed their salvation that day. A fellow, some five or six years older than Fred, rushed at him with a cudgel, aiming a blow straight at his head. Fred easily parried it, and gave him a blow that stretched him in the dust of the road. At the same time Terry, Tom Tipps and Joe Jencks had laid out their assailants in the same way, whilst four or five of the boys were themselves knocked out. Fred

rallied them with the academy cry, and the boys struck to him bravely. Those who were expert fencers soon had some eight or ten of their assailants so thoroughly knocked out they retired from the fight, while the others retreated.

"Oh, don't let them off so easily, boys!" cried Fred. "We want a little revenge for this thing!" and they dashed off in pursuit of about a dozen, who made a stand in the corner of a fence. The boys sailed in and whacked them until they begged for mercy.

"All right," cried Fred. "let up, boys, but every mother's son of them has got to go home bareheaded."

The boys secured fifteen hats out of twenty-two, which they placed on the ends of their sticks and resumed their march down the road. The country boys were completely defeated.

Many of the academy boys had received some pretty hard whacks. Some had lumps on their heads, others bruised places on their arms, limbs and bodies, while not a few had scratches on their faces that would be sure to leave marks of the conflict.

"Say, boys," called out Fred, "had we been Indians we would have taken their scalps, but as we are civilized we content ourselves with their hats."

The boys laughed and waved the hats on the ends of their sticks, and Terry suggested a war dance.

"Oh, no," laughed Fred. "Instead of a war dance we must smoke a pipe of peace, for we have got to explain this thing to the professor before it gets to his ears from other sources."

"Oh, he won't hear of it," said some of the boys.

"Yes, he will," replied Terry. "There are half a dozen of you that got bruises on your faces that can't be concealed, while some of you have knots on your heads that you could hang your hats on."

"You bet I have," said one of the boys, rubbing his head very tenderly, "but you ought to see the other fellow's head. I bet he's got knots on it pointing in four different directions."

"Oh, there's a lot of them got sore heads," laughed Fred, "but we must explain this thing to the professor as soon as we get back, and refer him to the Widow Green, who will bear witness to our exemplary conduct from the time we appeared on her place till we left. He must understand that we were attacked in the road, half a mile this side of her place. He's been good to us and we mustn't keep anything concealed from him, as that would shake his confidence in us."

"All right," said the boys, "you tell him all about it, Fred, and then let him question us, if he wishes to."

"All right, I'll explain it to him."

It turned out that Fred himself got a pretty hard thump on the head, from a fellow who struck him from behind, and when he reached the academy he had a hump there nearly as big as an egg. It made him mad when he felt of it, and he would have given a thousand dollars to have been turned loose just five minutes on the fellow that gave it to him.

When they reached the academy the boys went to their rooms at once, changed their clothes and took stock of the amount of damage they had sustained. Fred went in search of the professor, and not finding him in his study,

went to the cottage. He found Eunice and her mother there, but the professor was not in.

"Well, did you have a pleasant time?" Mrs. Lambert asked.

"Splendid," he laughed. "Don't think I ever passed a more enjoyable day; but I suppose the winding up of it might be considered somewhat like Tim Finnegan's wake."

"Finnegan's wake!" exclaimed Mrs. Lambert. "I don't think I ever heard of that. What was it?"

"Well," laughed Fred, "one of the fellows who was at the wake was seen next morning with his head bandaged, his eyes blackened and face held together with sticking plaster, who reported, when a friend asked him what sort of a time he had, that it was the finest time he ever had in his life, that there were fourteen fights in fifteen minutes, and only one whole nose left in the house, and that belonged to the teapot."

"Mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Lambert, "you boys didn't have a fight, did you?"

"Fight," he laughed; "just feel of that," and he bent over towards her, and placed her hand on the bump which a blow had raised on his head.

"Why, Fred Fearnot!" she exclaimed, "what in the world does that mean?" and she rose to her feet, whilst Eunice stepped forward, with her face as white as a sheet. Fred took her hand and rubbed it over the bump.

"Oh, my!" gasped Eunice. "It's perfectly awful!"

"Oh," he laughed, "you ought to see the other fellows' heads," and then he explained the whole racket to the mother and daughter, both of whom were compelled to laugh in spite of themselves.

"It served you right," said Eunice, "for walking off four miles in the country to eat watermelon with a lot of girls instead of staying at home with us."

"Well, Miss Eunice, I expected more sympathy from you than that," and he looked reproachfully at her.

"Oh, I can't sympathize with you," she pouted; "for I know you've been flirting with every girl you met to-day."

"No," he laughed, "the widow gave each of us one girl, so if any flirting was done at all, it was with her. Never mind, I don't want any of your sympathy. I came to explain it to the professor, so he might understand it when he heard of it from other sources," and with that he turned and walked away without giving Eunice a chance to say anything more.

The fact is, Eunice was very jealous and in a miserable state of mind all day long, for she knew where the boys had gone and that they were having a good time with other girls.

On returning to the dormitory Fred found the professor standing on the stoop, listening to the story of the affair as told him by Terry.

"I'm sorry it happened, boys," the professor said; "but I can't see that you were in any way to blame."

"We were not to blame," put in Fred, "for they were waiting for us, and made the attack without saying a word. We thrashed them and brought away fifteen hats with us as trophies of the fight."

"Ah, there's where you did wrong," remarked the professor. "Some of them may be foolish enough to go to town and accuse you all of highway robbery."

"Not much, they won't," laughed the boys. "They're sick enough of it. We're going to send them over to the newspaper office and get the editor to tell the story, and say that the hats are left there for their owners to get them by coming after them in person."

Then the professor had to laugh at the way the boys were turning the joke on their assailants.

The boys did as they threatened. They took the hats over to the office of the Avon Herald, told their story, but gave no names. The fact is, they didn't know the name of one of their assailants. But the next day the paper had nearly a column account, written in an extremely humorous vein, which set the whole town in a roar of laughter. The owners of the hats read in the paper that they could claim their property only by going after it in person, but not one of them was ever claimed. It may be well supposed, however, that the young men out in that end of the county never forgave the pupils of Avon Academy, but little the boys cared for that. The people in the town, however, gazed the country fellows so unmercifully whenever they came into town, that the feeling of hatred increased with them instead of being allayed, and one day, a week later, two of them fell upon one of the boys of the junior class, who had nothing to do whatever with the affair, and nearly beat him to death.

Professor Lambert was so indignant over the matter that he offered a reward for the arrest of the two young men, who, on hearing that the officers were in search of them, disappeared from home, and when last heard from were way out somewhere in the Wild West.

The other young men never claimed their hats, but were often heard to mutter threats against the boys who had captured them.

"Say, boys," said Fred to his classmates, "they are laying for us; so I guess we had better be careful about leaving the academy grounds without our sticks, or in sufficient force to protect ourselves, in case of attack."

"That's what I think," assented Dick Duncan; "when we go over to town again, at least three should go together, and more if they can go."

"Yes, don't forget that, boys," returned Fred. "If I knew their names I'd send an invitation to them to meet us somewhere, man for man, and fight it out to a finish."

"Oh, you couldn't get them to do that," laughed Terry, "for while they are strong, hearty fellows, not one of them knows anything about boxing or fencing."

"Say, Fred!" called out Joe Jencks. "There are some eight or ten in the class who have never taken any fencing lessons. Suppose we start a fencing school down in the boat-house?"

"Good idea," cried several of the boys.

"All right; there are six or seven of us who do understand it, so let each one turn teacher and show all he knows about the noble art. But if the professor hears of it, he will think we are preparing for war, and put us through a course of cross-questioning that will make our heads swim."

"Oh, we mustn't let him know it!" cried Tom Tipps.

The boys opened a fencing school down on the bank of the river, in the boat-house, and had a great deal of fun there during the next week. Many of the boys got some

pretty hard cracks, but soon mastered the art, after which they were more than eager to run up against some of the country fellows and have it out with them.

By some means or other the professor got wind of the fencing lessons, and spoke of it one day to the class, asking if they expected any further trouble with their late assailants.

"Oh, no, sir," answered Tom Tipps, "we practice all sorts of athletic exercises—rowing, running, jumping, boxing and fencing."

"I have no objection to that whatever," remarked the professor, "but I must caution you against having any further trouble with those young men who attacked you. Of course, if they assail you again, the right of self-defense is an inherent one, but I hope you will do nothing whatever to provoke another attack, and that none of you will make an excursion out in that part of the country again."

A few days after that about half the class went over to the city on a Saturday afternoon, and there met several of the farmers whose daughters had entertained them at the melon banquet. Several of them had their wives and daughters with them, and among them were the two girls whom the Widow Green had assigned to Fred and Terry on that occasion. The girls bowed to and smiled at the boys as they entered one of the stores, and a jolly meeting was the consequence.

"You haven't been out to see me yet, as you promised," said Fred's girl to him.

"Well, you know the reason why?" he asked.

"Oh, I suppose it's because you are afraid to," she laughed.

"Not a bit of it," he returned. "The same crowd of us can go out there and clean out all that end of the country, but we don't think it is a good way to court a girl—by whaling her brother."

"Oh, they won't bother you any more," the girl laughed.

While Fred was talking to the rustic beauty her mother joined her, having been making a purchase at the rear end of the store, and shook hands with him very cordially. She frankly told him, however, that the old man was siding with the boys in the trouble.

"Oh, well, madam," laughed Fred, "there won't be any more trouble, for none of us will go out that way again, simply because the professor of the academy will not permit us to do so. We hope, however, to meet the young ladies again, which we would be glad to do every time any of them come to town. We came over to-day in the hope of meeting some of them and treating them to ice cream. Of course, we wouldn't think of inviting them and leave their mothers out, so, if you will join us, we will go down into the next block and see how much ice cream we can get away with."

Now, ice cream is a dainty that seldom falls to the lot of farmers' wives and daughters, so Fred and Terry had a party of two matrons and three maidens on their hands, when they entered the ice cream saloon, where they passed a lively half hour with them. The father of Fred's girl missed her and her mother from the store where he had left them, when he saw them come out of the ice cream

saloon. He went up to his wife and asked her if she was crazy, spending money for ice cream.

"She didn't spend a cent, sir," said Fred, speaking up before the old lady could answer. "It was my treat, and there's a quart of it in there for you. So step in and freeze your innards."

"Gosh, no," he replied. "It ain't fit for nobody but women and gals to eat."

"Well, I don't know," laughed Fred. "I'm pretty fond of it myself, and on a hot day like this, anything cold goes."

"Waal, I don't want none of it myself, and what's more, I don't want to see you with my daughter again."

"What's the matter with you?" Fred asked.

"There ain't nothin' the matter with me, but there'll be something the matter with you if I catch you with her again."

The girl turned her back to her father and hid her face in her handkerchief, whilst her mother blurted out:

"Shut up, you dratted old fool, before somebody cracks your head like Joe's was."

Joe was her son, whose head was pretty soundly thumped by Fred on the day of the battle by the roadside, near the Widow Green's farm, and who lost his hat in the bargain.

To avoid trouble, Fred turned and walked away, after lifting his hat and bowing to the mother and daughter, and that was the last he ever saw of them.

Time passed on and the end of the school term approached. The boys studied hard to acquit themselves with credit. The holidays were coming on and Fred and Terry were trying to persuade each other to spend it with him in the home of his parents. They finally agreed to pay each other a visit some time after the holidays, and sooner if anything of interest to draw them together occurred. They had formed a strong attachment to each other, as well as to the teachers. Fred promised Eunice that he would write to her, and if possible return to Avon to pay her a visit at an early day.

The term ended with a great deal of credit to the academy, and the professor was highly elated at the prospect of an overflowing attendance of pupils at the beginning of the next one.

On the last day of the school songs were sung, a general hand-shaking all around took place, and a few tears were shed, as well-beloved friends parted from each other. The boys hurried to the train that was to bear them to their respective homes, and among them all there was no braver heart or truer friend than Fred Fearnot, who had made himself the beloved champion of the Avon Academy.

Next week's issue will contain "FRED FEARNOT'S PLUCK; OR, HIS RACE TO SAVE A LIFE."

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A DARK MYSTERY.

By Alexander Armstrong.

Black Cliff Hall was the finest old estate in Deep Haven. From its broad lawns the sea could be seen rolling upon a long sandy beach far below.

Full two hundred years the Tracys had held sway at Black Cliff.

They were lineal descendants of one of the grandest families in Great Britain, and allied to the royal stock. Of this fact every member of the family was proud.

But the present generation was the mere remnant of a once large family. The death of Major Tracy had left his widow and two sons, Tom and Alfonso.

Tom was a tall, handsome fellow, noble and generous to a fault. Alfonso was diametrically the opposite, both in looks and disposition. From the cradle the brothers had been at war.

Tom went away to college, but Alfonso would not adopt study. His tastes were wholly of the vicious order and he drank and gambled his competence away.

Then he fell back upon Tom and extorted money from him in various base ways, until Tom's patience wholly gave out. One day he called Alfonso severely to account.

For a time Tom absolutely refused to give his brother money. Alfonso waxed extremely surly and downcast. He spent days in his rooms in a hypochondriac state, refusing to see even his mother.

Fate now took matters in hand with a vengeance.

Tom Tracy had long since pledged his heart and hand to the beautiful Madeline Markham, the belle of Deep Haven. As fate had it, Alfonso also fell in love with Madeline.

His advances were repelled, and when he saw the success of his brother, all the blackest impulses of his soul were stirred up. From that moment he hated his brother with a fearful force.

Left to himself and cut off from the gaming haunts by lack of money, Alfonso was afforded an excellent opportunity to perfect a scheme for gaining his ends. This was a deep and dark one.

"Part of the estate belongs to me by every right," he muttered. "There is no reason why I should wait for my father's death. I should have it now, while I need it."

The next day Major Tracy came to Tom, very much excited.

"The house has been entered!" he declared. "Send for detectives. All my private papers have been overhauled and twenty thousand dollars in bonds have been stolen."

"Mercy!" cried Tom, in horror. "Can you imagine who the thief is?"

"No!" send for the detectives!"

This was done. They were soon at the Hall, and were quickly at work on the case. Every effort was made to locate the thief.

But in vain. Not until three days later did the truth come out. Then it was discovered that the bonds had been negotiated by a Wall street banker. Upon them was the endorsement of Major Tracy, forged.

Alfonso had mysteriously vanished at this time. Not a trace of him could be found anywhere.

The party who negotiated the bonds answered the description of Alfonso to a dot. Further investigation proved beyond a doubt that he was the thief.

In vain detectives scoured European countries for the erring son. The father even advertised full pardon if he would return. But no answer came.

A year passed. The Major had lived just six months after the escapade of his erring son. Every effort was made to communicate with Alfonso, but he did not come home to the funeral.

And now Tom became aware of one very painful fact. His angel mother, who was to him most saintly, was beyond doubt rapidly approaching her end.

Affairs had reached this juncture when Deep Haven was convulsed to its center by a most terrible report. This was to the effect that a demon had appeared in the place.

This creature, or being, whether human or spiritual no one dared say, had been seen at different places and different times, though always at night, by reputable persons.

His appearance was described as something dreadful. Clothing he did not wear, his body being beast-like and hairy, like that of a wolf, while his arms were long and gaunt and his fingers were huge claws. His face was indescribable, being that of a veritable demon.

As was natural, the little town was thrown into a state of the greatest terrorism. Men armed themselves, doors were double barred at night, and even in the daytime. Women were loath to travel without escort.

Thus matters stood when as Tom Tracy one night was walking over the cliff, homeward bound, he heard a fearful shriek for help just ahead. Rushing forward, in the dim light he saw two forms struggling.

The strife was almost instantly over. He saw one bending over the prostrate form of the other. Then he arose and glided away. Tom stood for a moment petrified.

"Heavens!" he gasped. "The demon!"

Then footsteps near brought him to his senses. It was the coastguard, four men, who had been brought to the spot by the cry of agony.

All rushed forward to the spot where the victim lay. It was a most awful sight which was revealed.

There lay the dead form of a well known merchant of the town.

The whole town was aroused. For days things were in an uproar. The merchant had been carrying home the sum of six thousand dollars. This was gone.

This fact more than aught else persuaded Tom that the demon was nothing more nor less than a modern garroter, or thug.

The demon appeared at different times and intervals. Yet he eluded capture.

Then another murder, similar to the first, was followed by a third. Still the demon could not be captured.

Tom Tracy might have been interested to take more active measures had it not been for the fact that his mother lay upon her dying bed.

Mrs. Tracy was confident that her days were numbered. She called him to her bedside and said:

"My boy, here is my last will and testament. I desire

that you shall hold the family name sacred and perpetuate it. This bequeaths to you the estate entire. As for Alfonso, if he returns be kind to him and care for him, but never let him rule. You understand?"

"Your words are wise, mother," said Tom, sincerely. "They shall be obeyed."

Near Mrs. Tracy's bed there was a high and antique chest of drawers. In one of these drawers Tom placed the will.

Then he went out and walked on the cliff. He looked out upon the sea, and as he did so he saw a strange-looking craft shoot out of a little cove near.

It had the appearance of an Indian lugger, save that its sails were of the whitest canvas and close hauled. Out beyond the point the little craft kept, and then anchored.

Tom's curiosity was aroused, and yet he hardly knew why. The impulse was upon him to go down into the little town just below and ask the name and character of the vessel. But as he started a man came hurrying over the cliff with pallid face and trembling limbs.

Tom recognized him at once as the serving man of the Markhams. At once he cried:

"Why, Jason, what's the matter?"

"Oh, sir, I have been sent for you!" cried the fellow in terror. "The worst has happened, sir!"

"What, you blockhead!" cried Tom, angrily.

"The young lady, sir. Miss Madeline has disappeared, and it is almost certain that the demon has her!"

Tom Tracy was overwhelmed with horror.

"Oh, heavens!" he moaned. "If harm has come to her——"

He did not finish the sentence. Down the cliff path he dashed. Not until he was in the home of the Markhams did he pause.

Colonel Markham was half insane with grief and fear as Tom entered. Tom quickly got the story.

Madeline had been out on the ocean road for a horse-back ride. Her horse came back riderless. Search was made, and fragments of her dress were found upon thorn bushes by the roadside, showing that she had been dragged from her horse and pulled through them.

Tom Tracy was beside himself with horror. The town was aroused, every inch of the country searched.

Everybody believed, of course, that the demon was responsible for her fate. But Tom yet clung to hope.

There was some dark mystery which he must solve. And in the midst of all some strange indefinable presentiment led him to associate the strange craft he had seen from the cliff with Madeline's fate.

This led Tom to post the coast guard to be on the lookout for the craft.

But now a more terrible matter began to claim his attention. Mrs. Tracy breathed her last in her loving son's arms. He could not bear to leave her that night. He paced the floor of the room adjoining until long past midnight. Then he sank into a seat beside the fire.

There he remained, until through the window of his room there came a curious sound.

It was a peculiar swaying, scratching noise, accompanied by deep breathing. Some strange spell came over Tom.

For a moment he could not move. Then he arose and went to the window. A trellis extended to the ground below. Up this Tom saw a strange, uncanny creature climbing. A stifled exclamation passed Tom's lips.

"The demon!"

Spellbound, Tom watched its efforts. Then he saw its purpose. It intended to enter the death chamber.

Tom crossed the room to his escritoire. Here lay a two-chambered pistol. It was loaded.

He took it and crept into his mother's room. Before him was the bier. Beyond was the open window.

Crouching down behind the chair, Tom waited.

Then up over the sill came a dark form. Into the room it lightly crept.

It was the demon.

One moment the monster seemed to attentively regard the cold form on the bier. Then Tom received a start of surprise.

The being turned and opened one of the cabinet drawers. From this it took a document.

"Mother's will!" muttered Tom. "What does that mean?"

He was determined to wait no longer. He would end the career of this monster now, and without compassion.

Raising the pistol he fired. The aim was deadly and true. With an awful cry of agony, the demon threw up its arms and fell.

Then Tom sank back half in a faint. The household was aroused. Servants and friends came rushing in. The sight revealed was a thrilling one.

Lights were brought, and an investigation made. There, upon the floor, lay the demon.

"Why, it is a human being!" cried one man, who had closely examined the monster. "As I live, he wears a disguise. His face is masked. See!"

And he tore off the mask. Tom Tracy leaned forward and looked at the dark, evil face thus revealed. An awful cry escaped his lips, and he tottered backward.

"It is Alfonso, my brother!" he wailed.

Then he fell in a faint.

Many weary weeks he hovered twixt life and death. But gradually he came back to the world again. A sweet face beamed above him.

"Madeline!" he said, dreamily. "You here? Then I may yet be happy!"

It was, indeed, the girl he loved. She had been abducted, it was true, by the demon who was no other than Alfonso Tracy.

Carried aboard the Italian lugger in which Alfonso had crossed the ocean, she had been held a prisoner until the lugger, exposed to suspicion, had been boarded by the coastguard and she was liberated.

Alfonso Tracy's schemes had been deep and villainous enough. At the last moment he had hoped to steal his mother's will and usurp his brother's rights.

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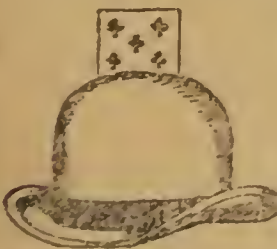
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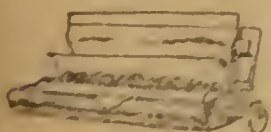
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perior in quality to commercial ones, at less than a quarter of the cost. With our cigarette maker in your possession, you can smoke a pipe or cigarette at pleasure, as it's just as easy to roll a cigarette as to fill a pipe. Every part of the cigarette maker is handsomely illustrated. Price, 15c., or 3 for 40c. by mail, postpaid.

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THE BOO-BOO CARD



Here is an innocent, and very laughable practical joke. It consists of a card, postcard size, blackened on one side, except a white circle in the center. On the other is an interesting sentence, printed in spiral form, so that one has to keep turning the card around and around in order to read it. The turning of the card causes the dark side to blacken the reader's fingers.

Price 10 cents each by mail, postpaid. C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

LAUGHABLE EGG TRICK



This is the funniest trick ever exhibited and always produces roars of laughter. The performer says to the audience that he requires some eggs for one of his experiments. As no spectator carries any, he calls his assistant, taps him on top of the head, he gags, and an egg comes out of his mouth. This is repeated until six eggs are produced. It is an easy trick to perform, once you know how, and always makes a hit. Directions given for working it. Price, 25 cents by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



The Dissolving Penny.—A genuine penny is held by the fingertips. You offer it to your friend, and when he attempts to take it, the penny suddenly vanishes without any trace and is immediately reproduced from some quite unexpected place. Price, 12c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

X-RAY WONDER



This is a wonderful little optical illusion. In use, you apparently see the bones in your hand, the hole in a pipe-stem, the lead in a pencil, etc. The principle on which it is operated cannot be disclosed here, but it will afford no end of fun for any person who has one. Price, 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE MAGIC WALLET



Lots of fun can be had with it, puzzling people, while being used in a practical way to carry bank bills, letters, invoices, etc. Open with the straight bands on the left, lay a bill on top of bands, close wallet; open to the left, and the bill will be found under the crossed bands. Close wallet, open to the right, and the bill will be found under straight bands. How did it get there? That's the question. Price, 12 cents each, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



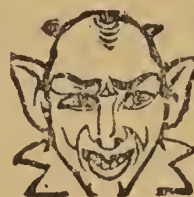
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We ship on approval without a cent deposit, freight prepaid. DON'T PAY A CENT if you are not satisfied after using the bicycle 10 days.

DO NOT BUY a bicycle or a pair of tires from anyone at any price until you receive our latest art catalogs illustrating every kind of bicycle, and have learned our unheard of prices and marvelous new offers.

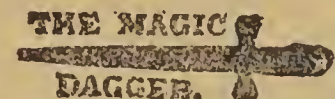
ONE CENT is all it will cost you to write a postal and everything will be sent you free postpaid by return mail. You will get much valuable information. Do not wait, write it now.

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THE MAGIC DAGGER.

A WONDERFUL ILLUSION. You can stab a friend. Your friend is not injured in the least. It will startle all. Price 12c each, or 3 for 35c. CHAS. UNGER, 316 Union St., Dept. 7, Jersey City, N. J.



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\$7.75 Paid for RARE date 1853 Quarters and \$4 without arrows. CASH premiums paid on hundreds of old coins. Keep all money dated before 1896 and send TEN cents at once for New Illustrated Coin Value Book, size 4x7. Get Posted and make money easy. C. F. CLARKE & CO., Coin Dealers, Box 21, Le Roy, N. Y.



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250 Jokes and Riddles, 73 Toasts, 67 Parlor Tricks, 3 Fortune Telling Secrets, 53 Money-Making Secrets, 22 Funny Readings. All 10c. Postpaid. CHAS. UNGER, 316 Union Street, Dept. 7, Jersey City, N. J.

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Ventriloquist Double Throat

Fits roof of mouth; always invisible; greatest thing yet. Astonish and mystify your friends. Nelly like a horse; whine like a puppy; sing like a canary, and imitate birds and beasts of the field and forest. Loads of fun. Wonderful invention. Thousands sold. Price: only 10 cents; 4 for 25 cents, or 12 for 50 cents. Double Throat Co. Dpt. K Frenchtown, N. J.



PROF. REGNUS' TRICK AGE CARDS.

Tell the age of any person without asking them; in colors, with full directions, 10c. by mail, post-paid. Address CHAS. UNGER, Dept. 7, 316 Union Street, Jersey City, N. J.

FOUR WEEKS (A LOUD BOOK).



Has the absolute and exact shape of a book in cloth. Upon the opening of the book, after having it set up according to directions furnished, a loud report similar to that of a pistol-shot will be heard, much to the amazement and surprise of the victim. Caps not mailable; can be bought at any toy store. Price, 65c. by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



VANISHING AND RE-APPEARING EGG.—Very fine, easy to perform and it produces a marvelous and mystifying effect. Egg is made to appear and vanish right before the eyes. Beautifully made.

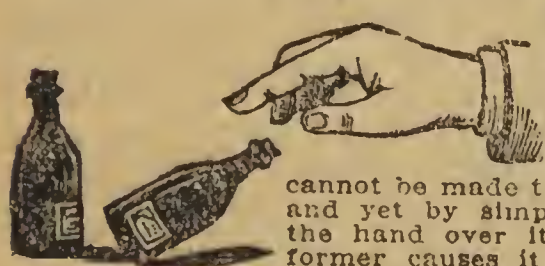
Price, 25c.
M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.

LITTLE RIPS TEN-PINS.



In each set there are ten pins and two bowling balls, packed in a beautifully ornamented box. With one of these miniature sets you can play ten-pins on your dining-room table just as well as the game can be played in a regular alley. Every game known to professional bowlers can be worked with these pins. Price, 10c. per box by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



The Bottle Imp.—The peculiarity of this little bottle is that it cannot be made to lie down, and yet by simply passing the hand over it, the performer causes it to do so. This trick affords great amusement, and is of convenient size to carry about.

Price, 10c.
O. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

SURPRISE PERFUME BOTTLE.



Those in the joke may freely smell the perfume in the bottle, but the uninitiated, on removing the cork will receive the contents in his hands. This is a simple and clever joke.

Price, 10c. each by mail, postpaid; 3 for 25c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

THE SWIMMING FISH



Here is a fine mechanical toy. It is an imitation goldfish, about 4 1/2 inches long, and contains a water-tight compartment which will not allow it to sink. To keep it in a natural position, the lower fin is ballasted with lead. To make it work, a spring is wound up. You then throw it in the water, and the machinery inside causes the tail to wiggle, and propel it in the most lifelike manner. When it runs down the fish floats until it is recovered, and it can then be rewound. Races between two of these fishes are very interesting. Price, 25 cents each by mail, postpaid.

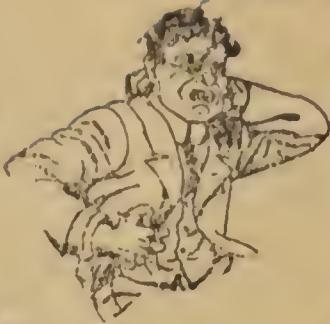
O. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



THE SPOTTER, OR THE EDUCATED DUE.—The performer exhibits a die. The Ace of Spades and five cards are now taken from a pack. The Ace of Spades is thoroughly shuffled with the other cards, which are then placed face down in a row on the table. The die is now thrown, and as if embodied with superhuman intelligence, the exact position of the Ace is indicated. Without touching the die, the performer picks up the cards, gives them a complete shuffle and again spreads them out. The die is rolled as before by any person, and is seen to come to a stop with the locating number uppermost. The card is turned over and found to correspond in position.

Price, 15c.
H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

ITCH POWDER.



Gee whiz! What fun you can have with this stuff. Moisten the tip of your finger, tap it on the contents of the box, and a little bit will stick. Then shake hands with your friend, or drop a speck down his back. In a minute he will feel as if he had the seven years' itch. It will make him scratch, roar, squirm and make faces. But it is perfectly harmless, as it is made from the seeds of wild roses. The horrible itch stops in a few minutes, or can be checked immediately by rubbing the spot with a wet cloth. While it is working, you will be apt to laugh your suspender buttons off. The best joke of all. Price 10 cents a box, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.

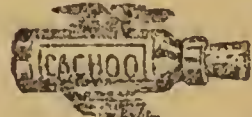
GOOD LUCK BANKS.



Ornamental as well as useful. Made of highly nicked brass. It holds just One Dollar. When filled it opens itself. Remains locked until refilled. Can be used as a watchcharm. Money refunded if not satisfied. Price, 10c. by mail.

L. Senarens, 317 Winthrop St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

CACHOO OR SNEEZING POWDER.



The greatest fun-maker of them all. A small amount of this powder, when blown in a room, will cause everyone to sneeze without anyone knowing where it comes from. It is very light, will float in the air for some time, and penetrate every nook and corner of a room. It is perfectly harmless. Cachoo is put up in bottles, and one bottle contains enough to be used from 10 to 15 times. Price, by mail, 10c. each; 3 for 25c.

WOLFF NOVELTY CO., 29 W. 26th St., N. Y.



SPIRIT SLATE-WRITING.—No trick has ever puzzled the scientists more and created a greater sensation than the famous spirit-writings which appear between sealed slates which have freely been shown cleaned, carefully tied together and given to a spectator to hold. These spirits answer questions. Sold by us complete, slates and secret. No chemical used. Price, 75c.

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THE FLUTTER-BY.



This mechanical flying machine is worked by a new principle. It looks like a beautiful butterfly, about 9 inches wide. In action its wing movements are exactly like those of a live butterfly. It will travel through the air about 25 feet, in the most natural manner. As flying toys are all the rage, this one should be a source of profit and amusement to both old and young. Price, 18c. each by mail, postpaid.

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MAGIC CARD BOX.—A very cleverly made box of exchanging or vanishing cards. In fact, any number of tricks of this character can be performed by it. A very necessary magical accessory. Price, 15c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.



THE PRINCESS OF YOGI CARD TRICK.

Four cards are held in the form of a fan and a spectator is requested to mentally select one of the four. The cards are now shuffled and one is openly taken away and placed in his pocket. The performer remarks that he has taken the card mentally selected by the spectator. The three cards are now displayed and the selected card is found to be missing. Reaching in his pocket the performer removes and exhibits the chosen card. Price, 15c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

JUMPING CARD.—A



pretty little trick, easy to perform. Effect: A selected card returned to the deck jumps high into the air at the performer's command. Pack is held in one hand. Price of apparatus, with enough cards to perform the trick, 10c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.



THE DEVIL'S CARD TRICK.—From three cards held in the hand anyone is asked to mentally select one. All three cards are placed in a hat and the performer removes first the two that the audience did not select and passing the hat to them their card has mysteriously vanished. A great climax; highly recommended. Price, 10c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.



APPEARING BILLIARD BALL.—A solid billiard ball, beautifully made, can be made to appear in the bare hands with the sleeves rolled back to elbows. Very fine and easy to do. Price, 35c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.



RISEING PENCIL.

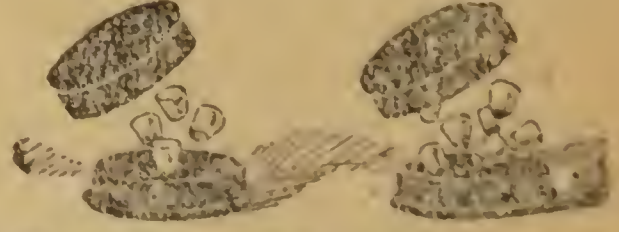
The performer exhibits an ordinary pencil and shows it top and bottom. The pencil is laid on the palm, the performer calling attention to his hypnotic power over innate objects. The pencil is seen slowly to rise, following the movements of the other hand. The witnesses are asked to pass their hand around it to assure themselves no thread or hair is used. Price, 25c.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.



"KNOCK-OUT" CARD TRICK.—Five cards are shown, front and back, and there are no two cards alike. You place some of them in a handkerchief and ask any person to hold them by the corners in full view of the audience. You now take the remaining cards and request anyone to name any card shown. This done, you repeat the name of the card and state that you will cause it to invisibly leave your hand and pass into the handkerchief, where it will be found among the other cards. At the word "Go!" you show that the chosen card has vanished, leaving absolutely only two cards. The handkerchief is unfolded by any person, and in it is found the identical card. Price, 10c.

M. O'NEILL, 425 W. 56th St., N. Y.



THE MULTIPLYING CORKS.—A small round box is shown to be empty and one of the spectators is allowed to place three corks in it. The cover is put on and the box is handed to one of the spectators, who upon removing the cover, finds six corks in the box. Three of the corks are now shown to vanish mysteriously at that time. Very deceptive. Price, 10c.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

WORK AND WIN

NEW YORK, JANUARY 10, 1913.

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THINGS OF INTEREST.

A certain millionaire bought a Raphael in Rome. The Italian law prohibits the exportation of masterpieces, and the buyer had the happy idea of getting the Raphael painted over. This was accordingly done. The rare old painting reached London in the guise of a modern snow scene. Then the restorer, under the watchful eye of the owner, set to work on it. With a sponge dipped in turpentine he proceeded to sponge the snow scene off. He sponged it off readily, but he sponged a bit of the Raphael off, too, and behold, underneath the Raphael a portrait of Marconi was revealed.

The Temple of Diana was built at Ephesus in 552 B. C. by the common fund of all the Greek States of Asia. Pliny says that 220 years were spent in erecting it. It was set on fire in 356 B. C. and again rebuilt and was finally destroyed by the Goths about 256 A. D. The ruins of the famous temple, after serving as a quarry for the surrounding region for a long time, were finally discovered by Mr. Wood in 1869. The Temple of Diana was 425 feet long, 225 feet wide and was supported by 127 columns 60 feet high, each weighing 150 tons. The marble of the columns was of the pure Parian variety.

Railroad men say that pretty soon a man will be able to travel by rail through the length of North America, or at least from here to its southern extremity. In other words, we shall be able to go from here to Panama by train, but of course, not without change of cars. Right now a good part of the way is already built, with still some gaps of considerable size in the system. But the construction of the line is under way in those places, and soon the New York to Panama route will have been established. A man taking it will have a pretty interesting ride, one would think, as he will pass through Mexico, Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama, besides, of course, several thousand miles of our own country.

According to The Engineering and Mining Journal, the copper-cutting instruments of the Tarascans, found in the Balao River ruins in Guerrero, are so hard that they would turn the edge of a modern knife, and it has been

claimed that these people, along with the Aztecs and Toltecs, possessed the secret of tempering copper. On the other hand, copper knives and axes, found at Atcopotzalco, are so soft that they can be cut with an ordinary pocket knife. Analysis showed that in all three localities the copper implements were of the same composition as the copper ores found therein. The blades from Guerrero, which are hard and apparently tempered, were made from the natural ore carrying nickel and cobalt, thus rendering the smelted alloy steel-like in hardness. Thus, the natural product gave an alloy of great hardness when heated and sharpened, while the other ores of practically pure copper, when smelted, resulted in implements which were soft and inferior in cutting value. The sharp cutting implements were, therefore, the result of Nature's handiwork, and it is indeed very questionable whether these people possessed the secret of tempering.

A FEW SMILES.

"Have you ever loaned Brown any money?" "I don't know." "Don't know? How is that?" "I transferred some to him, but I'm not sure yet whether he considers it a loan or a present."

"Well, boy, what do you know? Can you write a business letter? Can you do sums?" "Please, sir," said the applicant for a job, "we didn't go in very much for those studies at our school. But I'm fine on beadwork or clay modeling."

"Well, Martha, how is your husband getting along now?" "Po'ly, miss, po'ly; he's got that exclamatory rheumatiz." "You mean inflammatory rheumatism, Martha; 'exclamatory' means to cry out." "That's jest it, miss, that's it. He don't do nothin' but holler."

Practical Father (angrily)—I am told that that young man who comes to see you writes poetry. Daughter—Y-e-s, father, he does. "Huh! Publishes it, too, I suppose?" "No. No one will print it." "Then there's some hope for him."

Jim—Honesty is ther best policy, arter all. Bill—How? "Remember that dog I stole?" "Yep." "Well, I tried two hull days to sell 'im, an' no one offered more'n a dollar. So I went, like an honest man, an' guv him to th' ole lady what owned 'im, an' she guv me five dollars."

Two piles of apples lay upon the ground. One contained a large-sized and rosy selection; the fruit of the other was green and small. "Large on the top, sir, and small at the bottom?" inquired the new assistant to his master as he prepared to fill a barrel. "Certainly not!" replied the farmer, virtuously. "Honesty is the best policy, my boy, and one I've always held to. Put the little apples at the top and the large ones at the bottom." The assistant complied. His master was evidently as green as his greenest fruit. "Is the barrel full, my lad?" asked the farmer. "Yes," answered the assistant. "Good!" said the farmer. "Now turn it upside down and label it!"

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